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# FOUR TEMPLES IN MIDNAPUR, WEST BENGAL

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## *Introduction*

FOUR temples were selected for study in different parts of the district of Midnapur in Bengal. The first is the temple of the goddess Chandi at Bhetia in the Police Station of Kharagpur, of which the priest is a Manjhi-Fisherman by caste. The second temple is of the goddess Jaichandi. It is situated in Pitalkanthi in the Police Station of Sankrail in Jhargram Subdivision. The priest is a Lodha, member of one of the Scheduled Tribes. When the ownership of the temple was transferred to a Brahman zemindar, he appointed a Brahman priest who works along with the Lodha priest. The third temple of the goddess Sarvamangala at Kesiari has a priest who belongs to the Utkal section of Brahmans. The fourth is a temple dedicated to the goddess Brahmani where the priest is a Brahman of superior rank. Offerings made by Harijans are not admitted here.

The total area served by these temples is about 630 sq. miles, which means that people from this region generally come to these four temples for worship.

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A record was kept for a period of six months (October 1956 to March 1957) in each of these temples of the people who came for worship, their caste, the object why they had come, what kind of offerings were made, and so on. The priests themselves were paid for maintaining these records, while the author frequently visited them in order to check the results.

The author also records here with gratitude the fact that the entire expense of this investigation amounting to Rs. 900 was met by the late Professor Robert Redfield of the University of Chicago out of funds placed at his disposal by the Ford Foundation.

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**Chandi Temple of Bhetia**

The temple is 12 miles away from Kharagpur and stands by the side of a metalled road running from Kharagpur to Kesiari. It is 2½ miles from the bus station of Demanli. The population of Bhetia is 750, of whom the majority belong to the Solanki or Sukli, a trading caste, who have now turned agriculturists. There are also 40 Manjhi-Fisherman families along with a few Sadgop, Bhumij, Kora and Santal. The priest is a Fisherman by caste, and it was said that this has been so from the beginning. This is the chief temple of the Pargana of Balarampur which has an area of 214 square miles.

The present brick-structure was donated by Bijaychandra Paul in place of the thatched cottage which stood here formerly. There is an old tank near by named S a t R a n i r G h a t, 'bathing place of the seven queens'.

*Iconography*

There is a rectangular, brick-built platform within the building and a circular piece of stone, about 8 inches across, which lies upon it, is supposed to be the representation of the deity. To its right is a small terra-cotta image of an elephant known as Malabhanja which is considered to be her second representation. Both the objects are thickly daubed

with vermilion. To the left of the circular stone is a small broken image of the goddess Bhairavi, holding two swords in her hands. This image is about 14 inches high and is also thickly daubed with oil and vermilion.

### *Services, Castes and Purposes*

The priest, Basanta Bag, is 44 years in age. He performs the daily worship every morning after taking a bath and putting on fresh, washed clothes. He brings a vessel of water, some flowers, a little g u r or coarse sugar and sun-dried rice with him. The floor of the temple is first swept and washed by him. Then the priest sits on a small mat with his face towards the north, the dais on which the image rests being to his left. For the daily worship, no specific incantations are needed as at Kesiari or Narayangarh.

Special offerings are made on Tuesdays and Wednesdays by pilgrims who come from different villages, some of which lie far from the shrine.

Altogether 16 castes and communities were represented among the worshippers, and the number of objects for which they had come amounted to 15. Worshippers came from the following castes : Kayastha, Mahishya, Karan, Sadgop, Weaver, Barber, Oilman, Washerman, Solanki or Sukli - Trader, Marwari, Vaishnava, and from the following Scheduled Castes : Hari, Bhuiyan, Bagdi, Bagal and Manjhi. The total number of services during the six months under review was 159, leaving aside, of course, the daily routine service. Out of these, Sadgops accounted for 59, Solankis for 50 and Manjhis for 15. Other castes or communities were poorly represented.

The objects can be classified into 15 categories : (i) as a matter of routine family custom, (ii) vow and prayer for cure of illness, (iii) on completion of a vow, (iv) for general well-being of members of a family, (v) for prosperity in trade, (vi) for promotion in service, (vii) for securing employment, (viii) for safety while collecting fire-wood in the jungle, (ix) for cure of cattle disease, (x) for winning a law-suit, (xi) for progress in school, (xii) for success in theatrical performance, (xiii) for

peace in the household, (xiv) for the birth of a son, (xv) for success in political election.

Among these, item (i) accounted for 80, and item (ii) i.e. those connected with illness, accounted for 28. It may be noted here that while praying for the fulfilment of a particular desire, worshippers generally take a vow of some kind of offering when the object is attained. So that, there is only one occasion when they come for worship in the temple. Rarely, however, one offering may be made while taking a vow and another on its fulfilment. This is usual with regard to law-suits, not in connection with other items.

## *Modes of Offering*

Altogether 5 types of offerings were made to the Deity, namely, naivedya, aminyabhog, kshirbhog, mohanbhog and animal sacrifices.

(i) *Naivedya*: Generally consists of sweetmeats and fruits. Gur or coarse sugar and a small amount of germinating gram or pulses may be offered when fruits like plantains, guavas, limes, etc. cannot be offered. The cost is from quarter to half a rupee.

(ii) *Aminyabhog*: Consists of about half a seer or more of uncooked sun-dried rice and several varieties of raw vegetables.

(iii) *Kshirbhog* is a preparation of sun-dried rice cooked with coarse sugar, milk and spices. The cooking has to be done by the priest himself in a new earthen pot, and the offering is generally made in the morning if there is someone who wishes to make the offering. A small portion of the kshirbhog is served before the image, while the rest is returned to the donor as consecrated material. The priest is paid a rupee for his services.

(iv) *Mohanbhog* is prepared just like kshirbhog, the rice being only replaced by semolina. This is a costlier offering and in course of six months, only one case of this kind was observed. The worshipper was a Congress candidate who had been returned in an election.

(v) Previously, goats used to be sacrificed frequently before the deity ; but an influential zemindar named Nirmal Chandra Adhikari of Balarampur stopped this about fifty years ago. Personally, he was a Vaishnava, and members of this sect are vegetarians. Yet, at least one goat is sacrificed on the occasion of Makara Sankranti in the month of Magh for the welfare of the residents of the village. This is done at the edge of a tank named Talpukur situated two furlongs away from the temple. There is a saora tree ( *Murraya exotica* ) at that place ; and it is believed that it is the seat of Kali who receives the sacrifice on behalf of Chandi.

On this occasion, the priest himself decapitates the animal and receives the head for his services. If a sacrifice is performed on behalf of a man belonging to a different village, then the priest receives the head and has also to be paid a fee of Re. 1.25. A man belonging to the Manjhi-Fisherman caste holds the legs of the animal during sacrifice, and he receives one of the hind-legs as his fee. During the survey, a goat was sacrificed, but this has not been included in the tables, for the event took place at the tank called Talpukur and not in the temple itself.

Besides the five kinds of offerings described above, votive images of elephants and horses in burnt clay are also presented frequently to the deity. These are marked with vermilion, and then laid aside in some place. Occasionally representations of the eye in silver or round medals of silver leaf called chakshuchitra are set on the image as an offering by pilgrims.

In six months, there were 81 naivedya, 31 aminyabhog, 46 kshirbhog and 1 mohanbhog. It was also observed that out of 81 naivedya, the Sadgop caste contributed 25. Out of 31 aminyabhog, 15 came from Sadgop and 9 from Solanki clients. Out of 46 kshirbhog, 18 were contributed by Sadgop and 13 by Solanki clients.

### *More About the Priest*

The priest, Basanta Bag, leads the life of an ascetic. He keeps a fast on the day of the New Moon and also on days of

celebration. The services are wholly in his charge ; and, as has been indicated already, he belongs to the caste of Fisherman. He is a poor man and owns a small plot of cultivable land with a small hut to live in. On an average, the priest receives from 20 to 30 seers of rice in a month. Formerly, the zemindar used to pay him a salary of Re. 1 a month, but this has been stopped. Basanta Bag has had to fall back upon his wits in order to add to his income.

For the last few years, he has been taking out the circular stone representation the goddess in procession with the help of a number of his castemen. They carry it from village to village on a wooden carriage on their shoulders, while the stone is placed in an earthen vessel filled with water. Villagers make small offerings which are gathered by the priest. This is done specially during the Spring Festival or Dol Purnima for a period of five days, when the priest also carries some quantity of red powder, a b i r, which is distributed among those who come for worship. In March and April, 1957, he was thus able to secure 3 maunds of rice and a cash collection amounting to Rs. 12.

Basanta Bag reported that he frequently saw the goddess in his dreams in the form of a middle-aged woman. Then she tells him about the coming of worshippers to the temple, and bids him not to absent himself. The priest also secures through the same means prior knowledge about an epidemic or other visitations to the village.

**Jaichandi Temple of Pitalkanthi**

The temple of Jaichandi is situated in the village of Patharkathi, popularly known as Pitalkanthi, under the Sankrail Police Station. It lies within the Pargana of Digparni which has an area of 106 sq. miles. The village is 12 miles to the south of Sardiha railway station. Motor buses run between Jhargram and Kultikri, and this road is about 3 miles to the west of Pitalkanthi.

Pitalkanthi is inhabited by Mahato and Brahmans who belong to the Utkal group. A few Lodha families have settled

about half a mile away, the place being known as Talai. A man belonging to the Dom caste also lives in this place.

Formerly the country was covered by jungle in which Lodhas had their small settlements. It is said that once a man named Nandaram, belonging to Mayurbhanj, entered the jungle in search of a lost buffalo. Being tired, he fell asleep and dreamt that the goddess Jaichandi appeared before him in the form of a middle-aged woman. She asked him to build a temple and settle down here. Fortunately, Nandaram recovered his buffalo, went back home and returned with other men belonging to his own caste, namely, Mahato or Kurmi, and settled down after erecting the temple in honour of the goddess.

Formerly the jungle lay within the zemindari of the Satpati Brahmans of Banpatna-Khelar under Narayangarh Police Station. By a deed of gift dated 1820, they donated 50 acres of land to Tukmani Lodha, an ancestor of the present Lodha priest or Deheri, Hatiram, for services in the temple. But the Lodha priest no longer possesses any land as he was displaced by Brahman priests in 1866, when the zemindari passed on from the Satpati family to the hands of the Praharaj and Sarangi lineages. The former had no male issue, and therefore the property went to the daughter's line. These families invited Brahman families of the Utkal group to act as priest, a change in which they were supported by the Mahatos also. There was protest from the Lodhas ; and eventually a compromise was arrived at so that both Lodha and Brahman function together. This is particularly in evidence on the occasion of the Durga Puja in autumn when receipts in kind or cash are equally shared by the two.

One can guess that the Lodhas probably worshipped the goddess under a tree, as they do elsewhere ; and it was only later on that the deity was formally accepted, and a temple built by the upper castes.

The temple is a rectangular brick-built structure with a flat roof and a small verandah in front. Two stakes, h a r i k a t h, are set in front, one meant for the sacrifice of goats and the

other for buffaloes. Near by, are some blocks of stone with an earthen pot on top into which the blood of the animals killed is poured in. In the corner of the temple compound there are a few n e e m (*Melia azadirechta*) and k u c h i l a (*Strychnos nux vomica*) trees, at the base of which are placed terra-cotta horses and elephants already offered to the deity.

### *Iconography*

Within the temple, there is a raised platform 7 ft. × 2 ft. × 1 ft. on which the image and various votive objects are kept. The image itself is a broken one and represents the lower limbs of Durga seated upon an elephant and with crude figures of Ganesha and Lakshmi beside it. The Lodha priest has set silver eyes, a nose and mouth on the broken image, and also covered it with a red s a r i or woman's garment. On both sides of the idol, there are large terra-cotta figures of elephants which are also daubed with vermilion. These are said to have been offered by some worshippers long ago. Besides these two, there are two more figures of horses, about a foot high, set at the eastern side of the platform.

### *Worship*

Things like k o s a k u s i or water vessels needed for worship, a bell, etc., a lamp fed with clarified butter or mustard oil, a stone seat for the Lodha priest are also in the room. When either of them comes for worship, he brings a brass vessel with the water needed. Food offerings are generally served in platters of s a l or plantain leaf, or even in bamboo baskets in which they are carried.

The Lodhas claim that they were the original worshippers of the deity. So the priest belonging to this caste has the privilege of locking or unlocking the door and of sweeping or washing the floor. He fetches water, flowers, rice, vermilion, etc. for the services. Before worship, he takes a bath, wears washed clothes and prays to the deity in his own way. He does not utter any sacred formula or m a n t r a for the purpose. He also sweeps the temple, morning and evening, and lights the evening lamp which is fed by mustard oil.

The present Lodha priest wears a sacred thread, and has also purchased a copy of *Purohit Darpana* or *Mirror of Priestcraft* which is used extensively by Brahman priests, and in which Brahmanical rituals are carefully described.

Animal sacrifices are usually offered to the goddess on Tuesdays and Saturdays. The Brahman priest attends only on these days. He is a man named Mohini Mohan Pahari, belonging to the Bharadwaja g o t r a. His ancestors were brought to this place in 1866. Pahari shares the receipts from worship equally with Hatiram, the Lodha, and the latter in his turn divides the receipts equally among eight claimants in the joint family to which he belongs, and which is formed by his brothers or their descendants. It has been observed by the writer that the Brahman receives his share from offerings only when he is present. When he is not, as he is generally late in the morning, the Lodha carries away all he can.

It was also observed that during worship, the Lodha priest takes his seat upon the dais, but the Brahman may only sit on the floor, at a lower level, which is indicative of the former's superior position. It may also be noted here that during the celebration of the Durga Puja in autumn 1956, the zemindar employed several people to serve, so that there might be no quarrel among those who were entitled to do so. Potters of the village of Tiakathi furnished earthenware worth Rs. 2.50 ; but in the following year there was an elected committee for managing affairs, and they purchased earthenware from the market, as well as mustard oil from the Oilman in the bazaar. The traditional rights and duties are being slowly by-passed.

Lodhas are generally engaged here for the sacrifice of goats, but other castes may also do so. The fees paid during sacrifice are as follows : Priest 25 nP, Slayer 25 nP., Assistant to Slayer 25 nP, Drummer 3 nP. When a goat is being sacrificed, some sweets are also presented with it. The latter is divided equally between the Brahman and Lodha priests. The head of the animal goes to the Lodha. But if there are many sacrifices on a day, it is shared by him freely with the people of the village. Sometimes, the priest also sells them.

The present Brahman priest also serves in the house of Mahatos and is suitably remunerated. Hatiram, the Lodha priest, is also invited to worship the deities Sitala, who has control over small-pox, and Manasa, the goddess of snakes, from beyond the boundaries of his village. Then he personally also acts as Slayer, and earns a fair amount thereby. Hatiram also once served the Santals who turned to worship Sitala for fear of an epidemic of small-pox.

### *Castes and Purposes of Worship*

Barring out the daily offerings, it was observed during six months that 834 acts of worship took place in which 31 castes participated, and for altogether 16 kinds of objects.

The castes or communities were as follows : Brahman, Kayastha, Karan, Sadgop, Weaver, Barber, Oilman, Washerman, Goldsmith, Potter, Fisherman, Blacksmith, Carpenter, Milkman, Leather-worker, Kshatriya, Mahato or Kurmi Kshatriya or Mahat Kshatriya, Vaishnava, Sahis or Chalak, Bhuiyan, Manjhi, Namasudra, Hari, Mal, Dom, Mahali, Bhumij, Kora, Lodha, Santal and Mohammedan.

Mahatos were responsible for 519, Sadgops for 62, Kayasthas for 27 and Brahmans for 26 acts of offering. It is interesting that 4 were made by Mohammedans. The last were not permitted to enter the temple, and they sent their offerings through Mahato friends. It might be noted here that two offerings in which many people belonging to various castes participated have been credited to Mahatos, as the leaders who organized these joint worships belonged to that caste.

The objects for which worship was offered were as follows : (i) for a son, (ii) in gratitude for the birth of a son, (iii) recovery after illness, (iv) for prosperity in service, (v) for peace or general welfare, (vi) for security and promotion in one's service, (vii) for good crops, (viii) for cure of cattle disease, (ix) for recovery of lost cattle, (x) for more milk in the cow's udder and for the health of the calf, (xi) prayer for wealth and property, (xii) for victory in a law-suit, (xiii) for success in school examination, (xiv) for a good match in

marriage, (xv) for winning a football match, (xvi) as an annual routine duty customary in the family.

One of the joint worships referred to in the previous paragraph, under the leadership of a Mahato, took place in the village of Angarnali in the Police Station of Sankrail. There was a proposal of building a landing ground for airplanes and the Government had provisionally selected the site of this village for the purpose. The villagers, headed by a Mahato, therefore, came to the temple and vowed to offer a buffalo and two goats to the deity if they were spared. This item has been included under the head, (v) for peace and general welfare. In the other case, a football team captained by a Mahato lad offered worship after victory had been obtained.

## *Offerings*

The first kind of offering consists of sweetmeats like batasa, bunde, sandesh, etc., accompanied sometimes by milk. The pilgrim fasts, takes an early bath and wears clean, newly washed clothes before coming to the temple. A fee is paid to the priest who also retains a small share of the offerings. The total number of such offerings in six months was 555, of which 3 were accompanied by milk. Among these Mahatos alone were responsible for 339. Brahmans accounted for 20 and Doms for 8.

The second kind consists of fruits, which are usually pumpkins and gourds. In one case, two coco-nuts were presented. The fruits are retained wholly by the priests. The majority of the fruits were the first fruits from the garden of the worshipper that year. Five were for securing peace and general welfare, and 1 was in accordance with family custom. The total number of offerings of the second kind was 12, out of which 2 came from Brahmans, 1 from a Weaver, 1 from a Milkman, 4 from Mahatos, 2 from Carpenters, 2 from Bhumijas.

The third type of offering consists of animal sacrifices, in which buffaloes, goats or sheep are used for the purpose. There were 267 such offerings, barring 4 buffaloes which have not

been included in the tables. There were also cases in which two goats were sacrificed at the same time, but they have been counted as one, in accordance with the number of worshippers involved. The total number of animals sacrificed was 293, out of which 4 were buffaloes and 267 were goats and 26 sheep.

Buffaloes are mainly offered by Lodhas. The body of the animal is usually carried away by Santals who eat beef, and who gather from various villages when the news goes round. Last year, there was a quarrel over shares, and it ended in a bloody fight. So, the Lodha and Brahman priest appealed to the Police for help when a buffalo sacrifice had to take place.

It was further observed that the total number of offerings to the deity after recovery from illness amounted to 308 out of 834. Out of these, 145 consisted of sweetmeats and 163 of animals. In 26 cases, two goats were offered instead of one. There were also 155 cases in which worship was a matter of annual family routine. In 4 cases, 4 pairs of fire-crackers were offered and goats sacrificed for the birth of a son. In a similar case, a garland of paper flowers, ornamented with mica foil, was presented to the deity along with the sacrifice of a goat.

One Mohammedan offered two goats for sacrifice on the birth of a son. It was said that on that particular day, the sky became overcast and therefore the Lodha priest and the Slayer demanded extra remuneration. Three other Mohammedan worshippers came because this was the custom in the family for several years past.

Besides all the above kinds of offerings, terra-cotta images of horses may also be presented along with other kinds of offerings. These are first placed before the image, their foreheads daubed with vermilion and then stored under one of the trees in the temple compound.

**Sarvamangala Temple at Kesiari**

Kesiari is a historical town, 18 miles south of Kharagpur railway station, with which it is connected by bus service. The temple is of the Orissan Bhadra or Pirha Order. There is an

Oriya inscription on the dais which states that it was built in 1604 A. D. by a zemindar named Chakradhar, son of Raghunath Bhuiyan.

In any case, the temple is now partly owned by the Praharajes and partly by the Devs of Garh Krishnapur. The annual expenses including that for the Durga Puja amounts to Rs. 5,000 and this is shared by both the houses. Shortly before the abolition of zemindari, an endowment of 28 acres of land was made for defraying the expenses of daily service.

There is a thatched cooking shed to the south of the temple itself and also a well. Near the sacrificial stake, a stone bowl is laid in which blood is collected.

### *Castes of Priest and Servants*

Three families of Oriya Brahmans are employed as priests in the temple. They have the surnames of Mishra, Mahapatra and Chakravarti. Each family was assigned service for 10 days in the month. But when the Chakravarti died without leaving a son, the other two had to render service for half a month each. Later on, there was a case of adoption, and the present arrangement is that the Mishras serve for 14 days, the Mahapatras for 9 days and the Panda family for 7 days in the month.

The temple has also a family of servants entitled Parichha or Superintendent of services. This has been so ever since it was established. The present Parichha is a Brahman named Suryakanta Parichha. He retains the key after the temple is locked, and also hands out ingredients required for daily service. For these services, the Superintendent receives half the p r a n a m i or cash offerings made to the goddess, and one-fourth of the offerings, including cooked meals served. Another important duty of the Superintendent is that he has to hold and pull the legs of the animal when it is fixed in the stake. For this, one of the hind legs is given to him. Recently, this work has been entrusted by the Superintendent to a Lodha, who is paid 25 nP by the former.

A Maira-Confectioner supplies ¼ seer of sweets every evening and for this he enjoys 6 acres of rent-free cultivable land. There are also a few Potter families who furnish earthenwere specially during the annual festival of Jhulan. Kumud Bera, the Potter, enjoys 2 acres of rent-free land which also includes the land on which he has his home. A Brahman named Nakphuri Panigrahi waves the chowry during service; for this he enjoys 6 acres of rent-free land. The family of Panigrahis has been permanently at this post. Two Malakar-Florists named Gadadhar and Haripada Malakar enjoy one acre of such land for supplying flowers and leaves for worship during the morning and evening services respectively. A Lodha functions as a Slayer in sacrifices and is paid a fee of 75 nP in cash. Doms serve as drummers, the payment not being fixed. A few people used to serve as guards at night, and the zemindar alloted some land to them. This has been discontinued and the land has reverted.

## *Worship*

The temple is old and popular and people come to it from many places all through the year. The daily offerings are described below.

In the morning, there is an offering of fruits, germinating gram, sweetmeats and a small quantity of sun-dried rice. At midday, a seer and a half of rice is cooked every day. A quarter seer is also boiled, soaked in water and kept separately for the evening meal. The rice is served separately for the deity with pulses, vegetables and curry. In the evening, fish curry is served with the rice in water. During the evening worship with lamps, a r a t i, a quarter seer of sweetmeats are offered; and then comes the last rice meal described above.

The priest comes to the temple after a bath and in freshly washed clothes. He first sweeps the floor, and then sits in meditation of the goddess Durga, and then chants Sanskrit hymns in her honour. Offerings are made in the formal manner as prescribed in books like *Purohit Darpana*. Once every year, the image is cleaned, repainted and the dress

changed. This is usually done before the autumnal festival; and during the seven days when this goes on a small brass image of the goddess is kept outside the cella and regular daily offerings are made there.

### *Castes and Purposes of Worship*

The following castes and communities were represented among the worshippers in course of the six months under review: Brahman, Vaishnava, Kayastha, Karan, Rajput, Kshatriya, Mahishya, Sadgop, Oilman, Milkman, Weaver, Washerman, Conch-bangle maker, Goldsmith, Blacksmith, Potter, Confectioner, Florist, Barber, Tamli-Trader, Subarnavanik, Bania, Mahato or Kurmi-Kshatriya, Namasudra, Hari, Jele-Fisherman, Kaivarta-Boatman and Fisherman, Pan-Weaver, Manjhi-Fisherman, Barui-Betel-vine cultivator, Dom, Santal, Bhumij, Mahali, Kora and Mohammedan.

Out of 766 occasions of worship, barring the daily services, Brahmans accounted for 126, Mahishyas for 79, Rajputs for 78, Kayasthas for 72, Vaishnavas for 60, Santals 33, members of three sporting clubs, several members of a Thana Congress Commitee, and the staff of the Settlement Survey Camp. The Congress Committee came in for three offerings during the last General Election. A Mohammedan student also came for success in the school examination. There were actually, altogether, 68 students who came for the same purpose.

The following purposes brought the worshippers to the temple : (i) prayer for birth of a son, (ii) gratitude for birth of a son, (iii) prayer for recovery from illness, (iv) after recovery from illness, (v) on completion of certain vows, (vi) prayer for freedom from troubles, i.e. for security, (vii) for winning a law-suit, (viii) gratitude after winning a law-suit, (ix) for securing high position in high-school examination, (x) for prosperity in business, (xi) for cure of cattle disease or increase of milk, (xii) for victory in football match, (xiii) for success in election, (xiv) for earning reputation in theatrical performance, (xv) as a matter of annual family custom. Among these, (vi) prayer for freedom from troubles of various kinds, actually accounted for 265 offerings, while (xv) annual family

custom was resposible for 158 cases. 68 cases were recorded of students who came with prayers for success in examinations.

### *Offerings*

Sweets and naivedya are offered as, for example, in the temple of Jaichandi at Pitalkanthi. Out of 10 naivedya offerings, 3 were contributed by Brahmans, 2 by Rajputs, 1 by a Weaver, 1 by a Goldsmith, 1 by a Mahishya, 1 by a Bania and 1 by a Barber.

First fruits of trees were presented to the goddess in two cases. Animal sacrifices, however, form an important item of offering in this temple. This may be accompanied by the presentation of sweets or with more elaborate gifts known as sorasa-upachar, in which cloth, vermilion, paper garlands, etc. are also placed before the deity. These are costly, and one has to spend about 40 or 50 rupees for the purpose. 7 sorasa-upachar offerings were made during the six months under review, 4 being for recovery from illness and 3 as a matter of family custom. In this, fire-worship or homa was performed with clarified butter and rice was cooked and presented. Five were cases of sorasa-upachar worship accompanied by animal sacrifice. One worshipper belonging to the Vaishnava sect did so, although this is contrary to the practice of the sect. Annabhog or offerings of cooked rice are pretty common here ; the rice being brought by the worshipper, while it is cooked in the temple by the priest. There were 7 such cases, 3 being for recovery from illness. A Vaishnava also presented a silver decoration for the image along with his rice offering.

**Brahmani Temple Kasba**

### *Legendary History*

The temple of Brahmani is situated in Kasba, which is 1½ miles east of the railway station of Narayangarh. The population is 122, and the number of families is 22. Of these, Brahmans constitute 3, Mahishya 2, Lodha 16 and Dom 1 family. The two Brahman families serve as priests. The Pargana of Narayangarh has an extent of 194.6 square miles.

The temple is supposed to date back to 1265 A. D. when Gandharva Paul Srichandan was the ruler of this tract. Gandharva Paul belonged to the Sadgop caste and came from the district of Burdwan. Once, while on his way on foot to the pilgrimage of Puri, he spent the night at Kasba. Then the goddesses Brahmani, Rudrani and Indrani appeared to him in a dream, and said that they had been lying in the jungle uncared for. He was to build a shrine for them and arrange for their regular worship. The deities also told him of a medicinal herb which grew there, whose root would give magical protection in all kinds of difficulties.

Gandharva Paul woke up and after a search discovered three images lying uncared for. He hid them in a tank and proceeded on pilgrimage. On reaching Puri, he learnt that the queen had been in labour pain for twelve days. The king's physician could do nothing, and it had been announced by the king that anyone who would be able to relieve the queen would be rewarded with half his kingdom. Gandharva Paul offered his services and administered the root that he had secured after the dream, and forthwith the queen gave birth to a healthy baby. Gandharva Paul was rewarded with part of the king's dominion of which the Pargana of Narayangarh formed a part. Gandharva Paul was set upon the throne, and sandal-wood paste brought from the temple of Jagannath was applied on his forehead. Hence, he earned the title of Srichandan.

Gandharva Paul Srichandan then established his capital, built the temple and invited a Brahman family for service, and endowed him with a few acres of land. An earthen lamp fed by clarified butter was kept perpetually alight in the shrine ; but it is said that when Rajah Prithwivallabh died in 1883, the lamp suddenly went out of its own.

As the temple lies on the way from Bengal to Puri, and pilgrims had to pass by it, it is said that they had to carry the print of a coin on a piece of cloth from this temple and produce it at the gate of the Jagannath temple in the city of Puri.

The compound of the temple covers an area of one acre. There is a high wall, and there are several rooms along the walls within the courtyard. Men belonging to the Paul family stay in the rooms on the southern side during the festival of Durga Puja. The priest and his family then occupy the western block, while the female members of the Paul family remain in the western block.

In front of the temple, which is built of mud and cleanly plastered over, there is a wooden stake for the sacrifice of goats.

The earthen images representing Brahmani, Rudrani and Indrani were destroyed during the cyclone of 1942. This year (1957), new ones are being installed in their place. But the original stone slabs discovered and installed by Gandharva Paul still remain. They are heavily daubed with vermilion, and silver eyes and noses have been set upon them, which are gifts of pilgrims. S a r i s or women's garments are also used for dressing these original blocks of stone.

### *Services*

Worship is carried on here according to orthodox Brahmanical rituals every day. The chief festival is however the Durga Puja in autumn. There are large crowds on Saturdays and Tuesdays, which are considered particularly suitable for worship here.

The priest enjoys 6 acres of land for his services, while there are 35 more acres, the proceeds of which cover the necessary daily expenses. Formerly, the zemindars used to spend between 3 and 4 thousand rupees for the autumn festival, but after the abolition of the zemindari system, this has been reduced to about a third. There is a Board of Trustees now ; but the five members of the Paul family still look after the entire property and do not permit any one to make any fresh donations to the temple. Outsiders may however contribute during the annual celebration, and make any presents they wish to the priest.

The priest, Jyotibhusan Chakravarti, and his nephews Byomkesh, Paresh and Ramesh carry on all the services. They are Rarhiya Brahmans and belong to the Parasara gotra. They do not accept cooked rice from Utkal Brahmans, but may dine with them while sitting in the same row.

## *Organization of Services*

The Chakravarti family has been in service in the temple since installation. But extra Brahman priests have to be employed during the Durga Puja, and the Chakravartis have to spend Rs. 20 to 25 for the purpose.

Formerly, the zemindar employed various men for special purposes. Some of them continue to be in service. Thus Srihari Rana, the Blacksmith, serves as the Slayer (Hantakar) in a sacrifice. He receives a fee of about a rupee and also one of the hind legs for his service. He fasts, takes a bath, wears new clothes and then performs his duty. A Lodha holds the legs of the animal tight while it is held in the stake. He has also to clean away the blood from the spot after killing. The Slayer and his assistant are paid 8 seers of rice by the zemindar. Occasionally, Suresh Kotal, the Lodha, acts in place of the Blacksmith as Slayer.

Doms are employed for beating drums when an offering is made, and his fee of a rupee has to be paid by the worshipper. There is no drummer necessary during the daily services. Previously, Doms were paid 10 seers of rice as their retention fee per month. Barbers are also necessary for the shaving of heads. Their fee is 75 nP which has to be paid by the party concerned.

## *Offerings*

Daily offerings are placed in three separate plates every day at 9 a. m. and 8 p. m. by the priests. The evening meal consists only of milk and fruits. Pilgrims bring in naivedya, consisting of uncooked sun-dried rice, fruits, sweetmeats prepared with grated coco-nut and coarse sugar. Those who come to make offerings, remain on a fast, and hand

over the articles to the priest, who is paid a fee of from 31 nP. to Re. 1.25. There were altogether 117 n a i v e d y a, in course of six months.

Talismans, k a v a c h a, are also given to worshippers by the priest. These who come for it have to prepare themselves on the previous day by taking vegetarian meal cooked in a new earthen or metal pot. The talisman is given on the next morning, and it is hung round the neck of the baby, as is usually the case. This is followed by the offering of a n a i v e d y a. Tuesdays and Sundays, specially when there is New Moon, the occasion of eclipse of either the sun or moon, are considered specially auspicious for this purpose.

Goats are also sacrificed frequently, this being accompanied by a small n a i v e d y a offering. Untouchable castes are not permitted to sacrifice a goat here. But if they wish, there can be a formal offering, after which the goat is let loose in the name of Brahmani. Vaishnavas also make goat offerings in the same manner in this temple. When there is a sacrifice, the priest receives the head, while one of the lower limbs is given to the Slayer or his assistant.

Another form of worship in the temple consists in the first shaving of a child's head in front of the temple. The priest offers worship and the Barber has to be paid a fee of 75 nP. There were 12 such cases in six months.

S i n n i is a special kind of offering peculiar to this temple. It is prepared by the priest, and consists of ground sun-dried rice, mixed with plantain and coarse sugar. This is generally used for the first rice-eating ceremony of a child. After offering to the goddesses in the form of balls, the child is fed with this sacramental p r a s a d.

### *Castes and Purposes of Worship*

During six months, the following castes were represented among worshippers: Brahman, Vaishnava, Kayastha, Kshatriya, Rajput, Karan, Mahishya, Sadgop, Weaver, Barber,

Oilman, Washerman, Solanki or Sukli-Trader, Raju, Goldsmith, Tamali or Tamli-Betel-leaf seller, and the following Scheduled Castes : Namasudra, Bagdi or Barga Kshatriya, Hari, Carpenter, Kaivarta-Fisherman or Boatman, Bhumij and Lodha.

The total number of acts of worship, leaving aside the daily services, was 139, this being distributed as follows : Mahishya 43, Barga Kshatriya 16, Sadgop 8, Brahman 8, the rest among all the other castes.

The purposes were 15 and they were as follows : (i) prayer for birth of a child, (ii) gratitude on the birth of a child, (iii) prayer for recovery from illness, (iv) gratitude after recovery, (v) celebration of the first cooking of rice after harvest, (vi) prayer for permanency or promotion in service, (vii) for general well-being of worshipper and his family, (viii) for prosperity in trade, (ix) for cure of cattle disease, (x) gratitude for a rich harvest, (xi) prayer for property, (xii) gratitude after getting property, (xiii) for progress at school, (xiv) for success in a law-suit, (xv) ceremony of first feeding of a child with rice. Among these, (vii) general well-being, accounted for 43 cases and (i) prayer for birth of a child, accounted for 33.

It is interesting to note here that a formal ceremony has to be performed, specially when taking a vow for the birth of a child. The worshipper in the latter case remains on fast and then, while bathing in the tank in front of the temple, makes a dive to the bottom and picks up any solid object which strikes his hand. This may be a pebble or a snail. This has to be hung in front of the temple door by means of the hair from the head, if it is a woman, or a new red-coloured thread if the worshipper is a man. Such a red thread is usually employed to tie a charm round a child's waist. When the prayer is granted, naturally there is an offering in gratitude.

TABLE 1

| Sl. No | Castes and communities. | Bhetiachandi | | | | Jaichandi | | | Sarvamangala | | | Brahmani | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Total. | Total. | 1st time. | Subsequent. | Total. | 1st time. | Subsequent. | Total. | 1st time. | Subsequent. | Total. | 1st time | Subsequent. |
| 1 | Brahman | 159 | — | — | — | 25 | 2 | 23 | 126 | — | 126 | 8 | 1 | 7 |
| 2 | Kayastha | 109 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 27 | — | 27 | 72 | — | 72 | 7 | 8 | 4 |
| 3 | Karan | 14 | 1 | 1 | — | 6 | — | 6 | 3 | — | 3 | 4 | 1 | 3 |
| 4 | Mahishya | 124 | 2 | 1 | 1 | — | — | — | 79 | — | 79 | 43 | 6 | 37 |
| 5 | Sadgop | 172 | 59 | 4 | 55 | 62 | 6 | 56 | 43 | — | 43 | 8 | 4 | 4 |
| 6 | Subarnabanik | 3 | — | — | — | — | — | — | 3 | — | 3 | — | — | — |
| 7 | Gandhabanik | 6 | — | — | — | — | — | — | 6 | — | 6 | — | — | — |
| 8 | Kshatriya | 11 | — | — | — | 18 | — | 18 | 2 | — | 2 | 1 | 1 | — |
| 9 | Karmakar (Goldsmith) | 18 | — | — | — | 12 | 1 | 11 | 5 | — | 5 | 1 | — | 1 |
| 10 | Vaishnava | 96 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 29 | — | 29 | 60 | — | 60 | 4 | — | 4 |
| 11 | Maira (Confectioner) | 4 | — | — | — | — | — | — | 4 | — | 4 | — | — | — |
| 12 | Kanouj Brahman | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | — | 1 |
| 13 | Goala (Milkman) | 18 | — | — | — | 7 | — | 7 | 11 | — | 11 | — | — | — |
| 14 | Rajput | 81 | — | — | — | — | — | — | 78 | — | 78 | 3 | — | 3 |
| 15 | Marwari | 1 | 1 | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 16 | Malakar (Florist) | 7 | — | — | — | — | — | — | 7 | — | 7 | — | — | — |

| Sl. No. | Castes and communities. | Bhetiachandi | | | | Jaichandi | | | Sarvamangala | | | Brahmani | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Total. | Total. | 1st time. | Subsequent. | Total. | 1st time. | Subsequent. | Total. | 1st time. | Subsequent. | Total. | 1st time. | Subsequent. |
| 17 | Kamar (Blacksmith) | 5 | — | — | — | 1 | — | 1 | 4 | — | 4 | — | — | — |
| 18 | Sankari (Conch-bangle maker) | 7 | — | — | — | — | — | — | 7 | — | 7 | — | — | — |
| 19 | Kumbhakar (Potter) | 28 | — | — | — | 15 | 1 | 14 | 13 | — | 13 | — | — | — |
| 20 | Napit (Barber) | 26 | 5 | — | 5 | 3 | — | 3 | 16 | — | 16 | 2 | — | 2 |
| 21 | Tanti (Weaver) | 47 | 3 | — | 3 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 36 | — | 36 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| 22 | Teli (Oil Presser) | 54 | 2 | — | 2 | 3 | — | 3 | 43 | — | 43 | 6 | 3 | 3 |
| 23 | Pan (Weaver) | 6 | — | — | — | — | — | — | 6 | — | 6 | — | — | — |
| 24 | Tamali (Betel-leaf dealer) | 2 | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | — | 1 | 1 | — | 1 |
| 25 | Sukli or Solanki | 57 | 50 | — | 50 | — | — | — | 1 | — | 1 | 6 | 1 | 5 |
| 26 | Raju | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | — | 1 |
| 27 | Dhoba (Washerman) | 32 | 5 | — | 5 | 7 | — | 7 | 16 | — | 16 | 4 | 1 | 3 |
| 28 | Kurmi Mahato | 520 | — | — | — | 519 | 5 | 514 | 1 | — | 1 | — | — | — |
| 29 | Chhutar (Carpenter) | 8 | — | — | — | 1 | — | 1 | 1 | — | 1 | 6 | — | 6 |
| 30 | Jele (Fisherman) | 3 | — | — | — | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | — | 1 | — | — | — |
| 31 | Kaivarta (Fisherman) | 4 | — | — | — | — | — | — | 3 | — | 3 | 1 | — | 1 |
| 32 | Manjhi (Fisherman) | 32 | 15 | — | 15 | 3 | — | 3 | 14 | — | 14 | — | — | — |

| Sl. No. | Castes and communities. | Bhetiachandi | | | Jaichandi | | | Sarvamangala | | | Brahmani | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Total. | 1st time. | Subsequent. | Total. | 1st time. | Subsequent. | Total. | 1st time. | Subsequent. | Total. | 1st time. | Subsequent. |
| 33 | Mal | 2 | — | — | 2 | — | 2 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 34 | Chalak or Sahis (Horse keeper) | 10 | — | — | 10 | — | 10 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 35 | Bagdi | 21 | 5 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 16 | 2 | 14 |
| 36 | Namahsudra | 15 | — | — | 1 | — | 1 | 8 | — | 8 | 6 | 2 | 4 |
| 37 | Hari | 12 | 2 | — | 2 | — | 2 | 2 | — | 2 | 6 | 2 | 4 |
| 38 | Muchi | 1 | — | — | 1 | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 39 | Dom or Chandal | 15 | — | — | 8 | 1 | 7 | 7 | — | 7 | — | — | — |
| 40 | Bhuiyan | 15 | 1 | — | 14 | 3 | 11 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 41 | Bauri | 12 | — | — | — | — | — | 12 | — | 12 | — | — | — |
| 42 | Bagal | 2 | 2 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 43 | Bhumij | 54 | — | — | 27 | 1 | 26 | 26 | — | 26 | 1 | — | 1 |
| 44 | Lodha | 3 | — | — | 2 | — | 2 | — | — | — | 1 | — | 1 |
| 45 | Mahli | 4 | — | — | 3 | — | 3 | 1 | — | 1 | — | — | — |
| 46 | Kora | 3 | — | — | 2 | — | 2 | 1 | — | 1 | — | — | — |
| 47 | Santal | 55 | — | — | 22 | 1 | 21 | 33 | — | 33 | — | — | — |
| 48 | Pakisthani (Unclassified) | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | 1 | — | — | — | — |

| Sl. No. | Castes and communities. | Bhetiachandi | | | | Jaichandi | | | Sarvamangala | | | Brahmani | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Total. | Total. | 1st time. | Subsequent. | Total. | 1st time. | Subsequent. | Total. | 1st time. | Subsequent. | Total. | 1st time. | Subsequent. |
| 49 | Mohammedan | 5 | – | – | – | 4 | – | 4 | 1 | 1 | – | – | – | – |
| 50 | Congress Committee | 3 | – | – | – | – | – | – | 3 | 1 | 2 | – | – | – |
| 51 | Football team | 3 | – | – | – | – | – | – | 3 | – | 3 | – | – | – |
| 52 | Opera party | 3 | – | – | – | – | – | – | 3 | – | 3 | – | – | – |
| 53 | Trustee Committee | 1 | – | – | – | – | – | – | 1 | – | 1 | – | – | – |
| 54 | Settlement Camp | 2 | – | – | – | – | – | – | 2 | – | 2 | – | – | – |
| | Total : | 1898 | 159 | 9 | 150 | 834 | 24 | 810 | 766 | 3 | 763 | 139 | 28 | 111 |

TABLE 2

| Sl. No. | Temples | Total worships | Worshippers coming for the first time | | Worshippers coming more than once | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | No. | % | No, | % |
| 1 | Bhetiachandi | 159 | 9 | 5·66 | 150 | 94.33 |
| 2 | Jaichandi | 834 | 24 | 2.87 | 810 | 97.12 |
| 3 | Sarvamangala | 766 | 3 | 0.39 | 763 | 99.60 |
| 4 | Brahmani | 139 | 28 | 20.14 | 111 | 79.85 |

TABLE 3

*Distance and Temples*

Worshippers coming from distances in miles.

| Sl. No. | Temples | Total worshippers | 0 – 1 | | 2 – 5 | | 6 – 10 | | 11 – 15 | | 16 – 25 | | 26 – up | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| 1 | Bhetiachandi | 159 | 122 | 76.72 | 32 | 20.12 | 4 | 2,52 | – | — | 1 | 0 62 | – | – |
| 2 | Jaichandi | 834 | 294 | 35.25 | 192 | 23.02 | 244 | 29.25 | 75 | 8 75 | 28 | 3.35 | 1 | 0.11 |
| 3 | Sarvamangala | 766 | 462 | 60.32 | 227 | 29.5 | 42 | 54.48 | 24 | 3.13 | 10 | 1.3 | 1 | 0.13 |
| 4 | Brahmani | 139 | 20 | 14.38 | 47 | 33.81 | 33 | 23.74 | 24 | 17.26 | 13 | 9 35 | 2 | 1.43 |

TABLE 4

*Worshippers with their purposes in the temples*

| Sl. No. | Purposes | Bhetiachandi | | Jaichandi | | Sarvamangala | | Brahmani | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Total worships. | Percentage. | Total worships. | Percentage. | Total worships. | Percentage. | Total worships. | Percentage. |
| | Total : | 159 | — | 834 | — | 766 | — | 139 | — |
| 1 | Annual worships, customary | 80 | 50.31 | 155 | 18.58 | 158 | 20.65 | — | — |
| 2 | Prayer and vow for cure of disease | 28 | 17.61 | — | — | 22 | 2.87 | 4 | 2.87 |
| 3 | Gratitude after recovery from illness | — | — | 308 | 36.93 | 71 | 9.26 | 9 | 6.47 |
| 4 | Ceremony performed on auspicious days | 12 | 7.54 | — | — | 69 | 9.07 | — | — |
| 5 | Prayer for health | 4 | 2.51 | — | — | — | — | 43 | 30.93 |
| 6 | General prosperity in trade | 13 | 8.17 | 5 | 0.59 | 34 | 4.43 | 6 | 4.31 |
| 7 | Prayer for employment | 2 | 1.25 | — | — | — | — | 6 | 4.31 |
| 8 | Promotion and stability in service | — | — | 12 | 1.43 | — | — | — | — |
| 9 | Security in the jungle | 3 | 1.88 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 10 | For abundant crops and good harvest | — | — | 6 | 0.78 | — | — | 3 | 2.15 |
| 11 | After getting property | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | 0.71 |
| 12 | For securing property | — | — | 8 | 0.95 | — | — | | 1.43 |
| 13 | For birth of a calf | 1 | 0.62 | — | — | — | — | — | — |

| Sl. No. | Purposes | Bhetiachandi | | Jaichandi | | Sarvamangala | | Brahmani | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Total worships. | Percentage. | Total worships. | Percentage. | Total worships. | Percentage. | Total worships. | Percentage. |
| 14 | For cure of cattle disease and mre milk | 4 | 2 51 | 9 | 1.07 | 4 | 0.52 | 1 | 0.71 |
| 15 | After recovery of cattle from dsease | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | 0.71 |
| 16 | Prayer for a child | 3 | 1.88 | 1 | 0.11 | 10 | 1.30 | 33 | 23.74 |
| 17 | Gratitude for the birth of a child | — | — | 22 | 2.13 | 33 | 4·30 | 12 | 8.63 |
| 18 | For safe delivery | — | — | 1 | 0.11 | — | — | — | — |
| 19 | For progress in education | 2 | 1.25 | 4 | 0.47 | — | — | 2 | 1.43 |
| 20 | For success in examination | — | — | 8 | 0.95 | 68 | 8.08 | — | — |
| 21 | For success in a law-suit | 2 | 1.25 | — | — | 1 | 0.13 | 2 | 1.43 |
| 22 | Gratitude after success in law-suit | — | — | 43 | 5.15 | 10 | 1.30 | — | — |
| 23 | For success in political election contest | 1 | 0.62 | — | — | 5 | 0.65 | — | — |
| 24 | For victory in a football match | — | — | 1 | 0.11 | 6 | 0.78 | — | — |
| 25 | For reputation in theatricals and operas | 1 | 0.62 | — | — | 10 | 1.30 | — | — |
| 26 | For domestic peace and general welfare | 3 | 1.88 | 249 | 29.85 | 265 | 34.59 | — | — |
| 27 | Prayer for good match in marrge | — | — | 2 | 0.23 | — | — | — | — |
| 28 | Celebration of first meal of ricegiven to a child | — | — | — | — | — | — | 13 | 9.35 |
| 29 | Celebration of the first cooking of rice after harvest | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | 0.71 |

# BARBERS AND THEIR CLIENTS IN AN ORISSAN VILLAGE

NITYANANDA PATNAIK

(*Received on 20 February 1960*)

## *The Village*

THE village of Dimiria lies three miles to the south of Ranpur in the district of Puri. There are altogether 61 families formed by 35 families of Sudra-Cultivator, 12 of Kumbhara-Potter and cultivator, 9 of Dhoba-Washerman and cultivator, 4 of Barika-Barber and cultivator and 1 of Pana-Village watchman and cultivator castes. The total population is about 300.

The total area is 400 acres, out of which 80% is under paddy. A small quantity of pulses is also grown. The yield of rice is low, and estimated to be about 2,500 maunds for the whole village for a year. So, working people serve as labourers in other peoples' lands in the neighbouring villages. The Washermen and Barbers similarly have clients in other villagers.

Of the four Barber families, one has sufficient land to meet its needs. Two Barbers are employed as farm-labourers by two Sudra families on an annual contract. One of them, however, has recently given up this work for a job in Calcutta where he receives Rs. 120 for 3 months, excluding food and travelling expenses. Another Barber serves as a labourer, but has also opened a grocery shop in a near-by village.

## *Barbers' Services*

It is said that about a hundred years ago, there were three Barber families, whose heads were Balabhadra Nisanka, Joga Balabantara and Govinda Nisanka.

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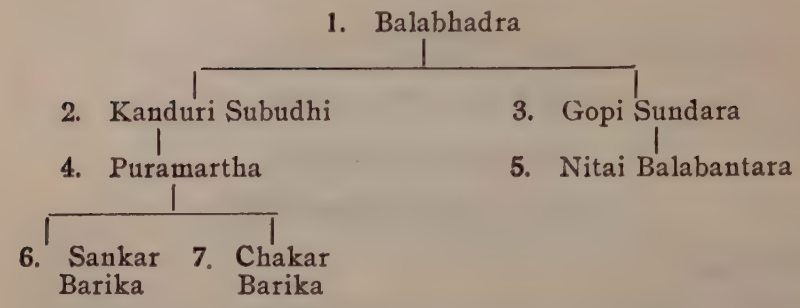
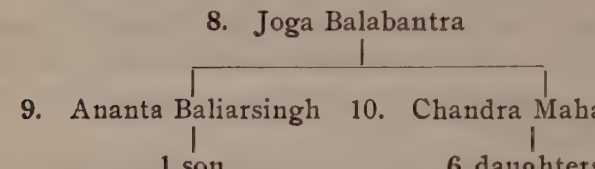
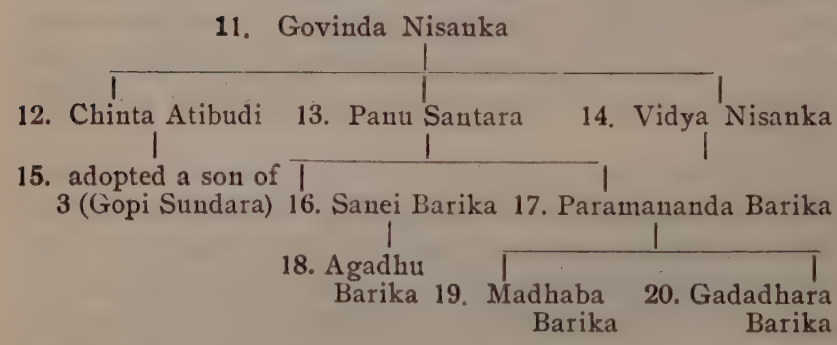
Balabhadra's descendants




Joga's descendants




Govinda's descendants




The Barbers numbered 1, 8, and 11 used to serve the villagers initially in their days, by equally dividing the families among themselves. After their death, their sons stepped into service. All villagers (except the Washerman whom Barbers do not serve) and also the Patnaik and Mahapatra families received service from the following seven descendants of the original three Barbers, namely, 2, 3, 9, 10, 12, 13, and 14. One of the sons of Barber 4 is engaged primarily as an

agricultural labourer on annual contract. Occasionally he does his caste service when time permits. The other son has given up caste service altogether, and serves in Calcutta as a daily labourer. Similarly, one of the sons of Barber 17 is not much attached to caste service. He had opened a grocery shop in one of the neighbouring villages, but has recently closed the shop and also gone to Calcutta as a labourer. The other son is not doing seriously his caste service as he is incapable.

The character of the wife of Barber 17 is noteworthy. She is notorious for her abusive tongue. She moves about constantly in the neighbouring villages and spreads news and views around. She arranges coiffure of the village women and pairs theirs nails too. On festive occasions she moves from door to door painting red colour round the feet of women. She is also called occasionally by women of the leading families for massage and she also attends cases of delivery.

About twenty years ago, the position of the village Barber was hereditary. A Barber's son was to continue his service in the family of his father's patron known as S a a n t a. Neither the Barber nor his patron was free to leave each other without sufficient cause. If a villager capriciously dismissed his Barber he had difficulty in getting another to serve him, unless his original Barber gave his consent. There was at that time the caste panchayet of the Barbers which adjudicated upon cases of such irregularity. But since the caste organization has become enfeebled and no longer sits regularly, and as village solidarity has in these days been shattered by the development of factions and other disturbing causes, contracts between the Barbers and their clients has become very loose ; and under the slightest provocation the contract of service breaks down at any time of the year.

Now-a-days contracts between Barbers and their patrons are verbal. A Barber's son may contract for service with some or all of his father's clients or he may contract with the residents of other villages as well. The contract is broken by either party normally at the end of the year, that is, at the time of Dol Purnima which falls in the month of March. The contract may

also be broken at any time of the year, as already stated, under abnormal situations. If both the parties are dissatisfied with each other for some reason or another, such as irregular payment of dues, failure to attend to services in time, not buying things from the shop of a patron and not helping in agricultural operations etc., the contract may be broken and negotiation with new people is started by either of the parties.

By way of illustration, three cases are given below.

Case 1. Kamal Lochan, a villager of Dimiria. has opened a grocery shop in the village. Since his Barber did not buy things from his shop, he dismissed the latter and appointed a new Barber in the middle of the year.

Case 2. Gouranga Patnaik, another villager, asked his Barber to carry a load of vegetables and other presents to his daughter's house in Nayagarh, nearly 12 miles from Dimiria. As his Barber was actuaally ill he could not undertake the journey. Being angry, his patron carried the load in the service bus and on return from his daughter's house dismissed his Barber and appointed a new one.

Case 3. The Barber whose wife is very abusive, used to serve in the family of the writer of this paper, who is a resident of the village. As he does not know how to cut hair in the modern style, the writer's wife employed another Barber of the village in his place. The original Barber left without complaint, and the formality of obtaining his permission for the new employment was not considered necessary.

Now-a-days several young boys and married men patronize the town barbers who occasionally visit this village to shave and cut hair fashionably, although other members of their family may still patronize and pay the village Barber. The village Barber is always required for service on all ceremonial occasions. There is no instance of service performed by any barber from outside in any ceremonial function.

## *Barber's Services and Payments*

The Barber performs ritual and caste services. The Barber is paid on a yearly basis which is known as B a r i k a B a r a t a n a. It is equal for all men regardless of their economic condition. The amount of a Barber's salary for the year is determined by how many adult male members there are

in the family. The rate of payment on the basis of adults in given below.

| *No. of persons* | *Amount of payment* |
|---|---|
| One adult male | One bundle of paddy in stalk and 11 srs. of paddy in grains. |
| Two adult males | Two bundles of paddy in stalk and 22 srs. of paddy in grains. |
| Three adult males | Two bundles of paddy in stalk and 33 srs. of paddy in grains. |

The amount of payment which is given above is only for shaving and cutting hair. In addition to this annual salary, the Barber gets extra remuneration which is paid to him either in cash and/or in kind during rites of passage and on other festive occasions. The nature of work which a Barber does in several rites of passage and other occasions, and the kind and amount of payment made are given briefly in a table below.

| *Occasion* | *Nature of service* | *Payment* |
|---|---|---|
| Marriage | Distribution of areca-nut among the relatives, and communicating the day of marriage, washing feet of the assembled guests on the day of marriage, arranging bed and spreading mats for them to sit upon and relax; supplying necessary items to the priest at the marriage ceremony, supplying water for bathing and washing, removing leaf-plates and cleaning the place where the feast was held, accompanying the groom to the bride's house as custodian of marriage articles. | Rice 5½ srs., paddy 11 srs. and a piece of new cloth. |
| | Barber's wife performs what is known as 'Dian Ganasa' in which she ritually bathes the village goddess and decorates the image with oil, vermilion and flowers. She also carries the bride to the platform where marriage is performed. | |

| *Occasion* | *Nature of service* | *Payment* |
|---|---|---|
| Death | Communicates the news among relatives of his patron ; supplying whatever things are required by the priests for the performance of the rite during the mourning period. | All the used clothes given away after bathing at the tank on the 10th day. Rice—5½ srs. Paddy—11 srs. |
| | Pairing nails and shaving the head of agnates during purification ceremony on the 10th day. | |
| Sraddha ceremony | Supplying the leaf-cups made of jack-fruit leaves and other necessary items. | Rice—½ sr. |
| Other festive occasions | Binding the top of the earthen vessels, in which food items are sent, with plantain leaves and carrying the vessels by means of carrying pole to the houses of relatives of the patron. | The amount is paid in cash considering the distance of the road which the Barber has to travel both ways. |

## *Barber's Status*

The Barber is one of the clean castes in Oriya society. There are two types of Barbers: Kanamuthia and Oriya Barika. The Oriya Barika uses an open piece of leather known as muthi, to pack his shaving kit ; whereas the Kanamuthia Barber uses a wooden box instead. The Oriya Barber is a sebayat, having service alliance with the villagers on the basis of the Jajmani sytem, whereas the Kanamuthia Barber has nothing to do with the Jajmani system. His job is only to shave and cut hair. Both types of Barbers offer their services to castes like Brahman, Karan, Sudra, Khandayat, Gour, Oriya, Goldsmith and Confectioner ; but they do not serve castes such as Oilmen and Potters. An Oriya Barber does not touch a Weaver (Tanti), Oilman (Teli) and Fisherman (Karatia) and the caste which prepares chapped rice (Keuta). He shaves and cuts hair of the Tanti and Teli (not of the Keuta and Karatia), while putting on a gamuchha or napkin which does not become defiled if wet even after touching an untouchable like the Tanti or Teli.

## *Conclusion*

The Barber has an important role to play in the village. In addition to shaving and cutting hair for which he is paid at harvest time in the form of grains as well as sheaves of paddy, he also acts in several ceremonial roles, the most notable of which is at the young Sudra or Brahman boy's first hair-cutting and ear-piercing ceremony. His service is also indispensable at the rites of passage and on many festive occasions. He accompanies the bridal party at the time of p u a n i g h a r a or Second Going when the bride attains puberty, and demands a substantial gift from the daughter's parents-in-law. The exact content and quantity of the gift is not standardized. It depends upon the wealth and whim of the giver ; though the Barber has several ways of expressing his displeasure, should the amount prove inadeqate. The service alliance of the Barber with other caste people whom he serves has become more flexible now-a-days since the caste assemblies of the Barbers have become weakened. Family quarrels and village factions have further weakened the traditional relationship which existed between the Barber and villagers. In case of outcasting, the outcaste was prevented from employing a Barber in his family. Now-a-days, boycott by the Barber does not work, since there are barbers in town who shave and can cut the hair of outcastes for cash. Ordinarily, the Barber is the person who carries news from village to village. Many Barber women also practise midwifery. The Barber has not only functional services in the village but also offers certain ceremonial services, such as propitiatiting the village goddesses.

# AN INDIAN VILLAGE : SOME QUESTIONS

BRIJ RAJ CHAUHAN

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EVEN at the risk of taking too literal a view of the proposed concepts of 'little comunity' and 'peasant society', the writer considers it essential for the advancement of ideas regarding the conceptual framework for describing a village in India to evaluate the analytical value of the concepts. The four characteristics of 'little community', as propounded by Redfield, 'distinctiveness, smallness, homogeneity, and all providing self-sufficiency' (Redfield 1955 : 4), have been subjected to examination with reference to a village of the size of 640 people in one of the north-western states of India, namely, Rajasthan. The first two of these characteristics are found to be present, the third requires careful reconsideration, and the fourth requires so many qualifications that the links begins to appear more significant than the self-contained nature of the village community. The concept of peasant society takes note of peasantry and elite as constituting 'the two halves of the double society' (Redfield 1956 : 48). While the concept emphasizes the connections of the village with the the town, the gain in analysis comes at the heavier cost of advantages that can still be obtained by the use of the first two characteristics of the little community. In the first section of the paper, the concept of the little community is subjected to analysis chiefly with the village Sadri in the region described above ; in the second, the concept of peasant society is subjected to an evaluation, and concluding remarks are brought in towards the end.

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I

**Smallness :** The village is located in one compact block with a population of 640 persons constituting 130 families and households. It can be the unit of personal observation and thereby be said to possess this characteristic.

**Distinctiveness :** This characteristic reveals 'where the community begins and where it ends'. In terms of the area occupied by the residential house, the fields of the village, and the inhabitants of the dwellings, there is a distinctiveness. When people go out and enter the path from where the village fields begin, they realize that they have arrived in the village. They calculate the distance of other villages not from the habitable area but from the boundary of the village nearest to the point of reference and direction. It is known who is a villager and who is a visitor. The fact of common living as neighbours and certain experiences of famines and epidemics in the first two decades of this century added to the distinctiveness. In a village having the j a g i r system of administration, with a feudal chief locally residing there, the distinctiveness has become more well defined. Maintenance of law and order and settlement of petty disputes were under his charge till the middle of the century when the system was abolished by legislation and the state took over the administration and responsibilities directly.

In the economic-ritual connections, this element of distinctiveness is present in a qualified manner. The agriculturists and the artisan and service classes are tied to one another in traditional give-and-take in terms of annual payments in kind in lieu of goods and services supplied, as well as on specified ritual occasions of festivals and crises of life for which occasional payments are made. The village under study has two types of functional groups : resident and visitors. The former are members of the village community, the latter who include Dhobi-Washerman and Nai-Barber, are persons who serve members of the community but are not of the community. The Bhangi-Sweeper and Dholi-Drummer, have dual establishments in two villages and suffer from the disqualification

in other villages. The village shows distinctiveness in terms of ritual ceremonies connected with deities of the locality. Kheda-khunt-ki-devi (the deity connected with the founding of the village) and deities associated with rains as well as the four principal deities of the village worshipped at various times of the year provide a sense of unity to the village. The festival of n a v r a t r a, and celebration of Holi, besides the one associated with semi-tribal dance, offer occasions for strengthening that sentiment.

**Homogeneity :** Homogeneity is a word used in a specific sense by Redfield. 'Activities and states of mind are much alike for all person in corresponding sex and age positions ; and the career of one generation repeats that of the preceding' (Redfield 1955 : 4). Viewed in this sense, similarity is carried over a period of time and 'slow-changing' of a number of units of social structure and ritual conform to the characteristic. However, the entire idea needs revision. In village communities where castes do not constitute units of social structure, one may come across the pattern 'having the constituent elements similar'*, but one may raise the valid question : Do the units of a caste-structured village like the one under study have constituent units all similar ? Whether one considers attributional characteristics of caste ranking, or factors of dominance (Srinivas 1959 : 1-18), or the interactional theory of the same (Marriott 1959 : 96), it is clear that castes are ranked unequally, that an idea of high and low types of food and occupation exists in the mind of villagers in India and that a change in such matters is 'slow'. The dissimilarity of the units in interaction at any synchronic point make the concept inapplicable in space, the question of its being carried over time does not arise. However, a caste in a village shows homogeneity at a point of time and over generations too. Thus a caste has homogeneity in the sense in which Redfield used the term ; the village community composed of these units lacks it. The village depicts 'not the harmony of parts that are equally valued, but of units that are rigorously subordinated to one another' (Ghurye 1957 : 27).

* 'Chambers' Dictionary meaning of 'homogeneity'.

Even if one considers the characteristic of 'slow-changing' per se, certain qualifications have to be added. All things do not change at the same rate. Alterations in houses, conversion of cattle-yards into residential apartments, digging of wells and transfer of holdings among owners and sharers as well as mortgagers have not been as slow as changes in marriage distances and strength of caste organizations. Differing degrees of variation have been emphasized for Shamirpet for different sectors of rural life (Dube 1955 : 218-31). The same author analyses 'cultural predispositions, cultural screens, and processes of cultural adaptation' (Dube 1958 : 129) in the community under his study which would show a qualified degree of acceptance of new ideas on the part of villagers. Without necessarily committing oneself to the theory of cultural lag, it can be safely said that different sectors of life of a people show varying rates of change ; and that such a difference in the context of the village community under study and communities under reference is meaningful.

**Self-sufficiency** : From the point of view of population, economy, social structure and ritual connections, it is difficult to look upon the village as constituting a 'cradle-to-the-grave arrangement' for its members.

The population of the village undergoes two transformations in the arrival and departure of wives and married daughters. The history of the village further reveals a change in population due to migration and natural increase of population. Better economic opportunities and other facilities have both attracted and sent off a few inhabitants to and from the village. The prevalent custom of second marriage on the part of females (widowed, as well as married ones having children) in castes belonging to the medium and lower groups, who together constitute 19 castes out of 23 in the village, brings in an additional change in the abode of the party involved. A fairly widespread custom of the region in sending the expectant mother to her family of orientation in case of the first delivery (and if possible on subsequent occasions also) suggests that, even for men, the cradle is in a village different from the one in which one has the likelihood of being cremated.

Inter-village organizations of particular castes with varying centres for including villages within a roughly agreed radius for regulating activities traditionally associated with caste councils have a term, C h o k h a l a, in the region under study. It may include villages which are fixed for these purposes, its wider organization may include a number of such units. These caste councils within the limits of the C h o k h a l a have functioned effectively on matters connected with crises of life —especially death and second marriage—and can hardly be overlooked even for obtaining a traditional account of rural life. A caste that depicts a segment of the rural community, in terms of its C h o k h a l a unit, can also be viewed as a group spread over a defined locality. MacIver and Page think think that locality and community sentiment are the two essentials of the community and opine that caste has got the latter but not the former, and as such is not a community. The caste in a C h o k h a l a has got a locality also, yet this factor does not make this segment of rural life a community. Either the view that a caste has got community sentiment has to be revised or it has to be agreed that the two elements of a community are inadequate to explain the concept.

Economic 'self-suffiency' under modern conditions is too obvious to need comment ; its limitations even in the traditional setting can be noted. Presence of the elements of self-sufficiency is noticeable in the inter-caste dependence of agricultural and functional groups in traditional relationships, in greater emphasis on securing loans and other assistance from within the village and, 'other things being equal', in giving preference to fellow villagers as 'most favoured' persons. Limitations are seen in the absence of certain groups like the Sonar-Goldsmith, in the presence of Dhobi-Washerman and Nai-Barber as visitors from the other village, in the recruitment of permanent ploughmen even from outside the village, and in efforts to invite certain groups from outside to settle in the village. In the modern setting, migration for educational and occupational purposes, growth of markets, experiments in tobacco and other cash crops, and growing use of hydrogenated oil and flour-mills for meeting

the requirements for large dinners emphasize urban contacts of the villagers. New networks with the growth of intermediaries and efforts at seeking semi-permanent relationship with merchants in the neighbouring township have begun to appear.

With its own deities, charitable institutions, repairs of platforms and approach-ways, construction of cisterns and ponds for storing water for animals, collection of funds for feeding pigeons, the village has revealed an identity of its own in the ritual sphere. Identity as a meaningful characteristic is, however, different from self-sufficiency. The village has, on the other hand, always considered certain centres lying outside its own boundaries relevant for obtaining blessings. A deity whose shrine is six miles to the south (Joeda Baoji), is invoked for relieving distress among cattle. A place twenty miles to the north is considered as the one within easiest reach for immersing the ashes of the deceased. Modern means of communication have brought the place on the holy river, Ganga, within easier reach, and persons have begun to go in larger numbers by making use of the railway. Soron, at a distance of little over 500 miles, was the favourite spot once ; now one sees a preference for Hardwar about 700 miles away. The latter place is higher upstream, more attractive, and ritually, too, a more beneficial place for the people. It provides the additional attraction of a chance to visit the capital city of India, Delhi, on the way. Some parties have included both the centres in their visits. Almost as a reaction to the increasing number of parties going to the Ganga, the higher and in this village also the more well-to-do castes of Rajputs included three d h a m s or pilgrim centres on the eastern, southern and western ends of India in their ritual itinerary. Viewed in this sense, the ritual activities of the people have, in fact, enlarged in area through improved means of communication, and wealth that might come through a bumper crop now and then. A trend opposite to that of secularization is in evidence in this sphere, though not so in the festivals.

Besides other contributors to the publication of Chicago University on *Village India*, McKim Marriott concludes his arguments on the nature of self-sufficiency of the village

communities thus : 'They cannot be conceived as things in themselves in their organization of marriage and kinship, residence patterns, modes of conflict and caste orgaization' (Marriott 1955 : 191). The classification of religion on the basis of spread of an all-India, peninsular (regional) and local areas suggested by Srinivas is quite familiar. Majumdar notes the lack of wholeness of a village community and states : 'A village is a *whole* when we ignore the ties and kinship bonds that unite larger aggregations of people, it is a *whole* when we ignore the methods of communications and the structural dissimilarities' (Majumdar 1958 : 325). Similarities in the observations of the writers on different regions thus helps one to get a clearer picture of the village, its wider connections and the limits of self-sufficiency in modern contexts.

## II

The concept of 'peasant society' focusses attention on 'Those rural people who control and cultivate their land for subsistence and as a part of a traditional way of life and who look to, and are influenced by, gentry or townspeople whose way of life is like theirs but in a more civilized form' (Redfield 1956 : 31). 'They constitute part-societies with part-cultures' (Kroeber 1948 : 284). Redfield took note of the peasantry, a concept developed by Wolf, and an elite, a concept advanced by Sjoberg, and combined the two to arrive at 'the two halves of the double society' (Redfield 1956 : 48), namely, the peasant society. Since the need for such a concept arises from the inadequacy of the existing concepts to understand the networks of the rural community, it is reasonable to ask the following questions :

(1) Does the concept of the peasant society present a clear picture of the internal organization of the village community ?

(2) Does the concept of the peasant society provide an adequate coverage of the links of the society with wider units ?

Even when a single village is not self-sufficient and homogeneous in character, it can still have an identity and smallness of its own. It can be viewed in a holistic sense and

serve as a meaningful unit of activities and study. Whereas the concept of the peasant society emphasizes the links of the village, it limits the attention to the 'peasant' section of the rural community. Rural community is larger than the peasantry. Of the 82% of the people living in rural areas of the country, 12% are not dependent on agriculture. For the artisans and service classes agriculture is not a way of living. In the village studied by Oscar Lewis the percentage of the rural proletriat (landless) is as high as 47 (Lewis 1955 : 151).

Under these conditions, it is proper to suggest the extent to which, if peasants are present, the society would be considered a peasant one. If preponderance is sought in numbers it requires to be stated. If the idea is one of guaging the factor of dominant influence, the same requires to be stated. Murdock set 'arbitrarily at 20 percent' the line for distinguishing polygynous and monogamous families in terms of the prevalence of plural unions (Murdock 1949 : 28), and laid certain qualitative categories for understanding a polygynous society. A similar effort could be made to understand the numbers or significance of the peasantry vis-a-vis the peasant society and its other constituent units. In the absence of such a clarification there is danger of paying inadequate attention to priests, traders, artisans, feudal chiefs, and village officials. Their interrelations and roles, respective to one another, would be covered only inappropriately. Moreover, the word 'peasant' designates only one status, namely, the economic, of the villager. If the study of rural community is to be carried on in terms of the web of kinship ties, forms of family, celeberation of festivals and other rituals, the focus of attention would have to be shifted to different bases since social institutions need not correspond to any particular economic base and vary with it at the same pace or in the particular direction. Either the concept of peasant society has to be defined in such a way as to include various other non-economic factors, or the term itself should give way to more broadly based descriptions like those of the rural communities. Use of the concept for describing the internal organization of the village is thus limited by the inadequate coverage of members of the community and their interactions,

and by the rather heavy weightage given to the economic basis of the community. It further requires to be understood what led to the substitution of the word *community* for *society* The 'little community' gave way to 'peasant society' and in the latter book the word 'society' occurring frequently in chapters I and II is substituted by the word 'community' in chapter III. The re-emergence of the word is welcome in the light of its emphasis on the holistic nature of studies in contrast to the segmental one suggested by the term 'society'.

The second question relates to the extent to which the concept of the peasant society can be helpful in describing the connections of the villagers with the wider units. It has to be clarified that these links are both traditional and modern, that they cover two types of areas, namely, the rural and the urban. The following diagram illustrates the idea :

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Links of the villagers | Traditional | Rural |
| | | Urban |
| | Modern | Rural |
| | | Urban |

If the links have been properly identified, the question may be raised : Does the concept of the elite encompass the four varieties of relations ? It is obvious that the elite need not be mobilized for establishing relations of those artisans and service classes who come from other villages to work for patrons in the village (from this point of view, the relations of Nai-Barber, Dhobi-Washerman, Dholi-Drummer, and Darzi -Tailor with their clientele in the village under study would hardly be covered by these relations). Castes organized over a group of villages in traditional inter-village intra-caste ties of C h o k h a l a illustrate traditional rural connections of the villagers and cannot be explained through the concept of the elite. Inter-village visits of recreational parties among the semi-tribal people, of individuals for purchasing cows and buffaloes, for engaging farm servants from other villages, are additional illustrations of the same trend. Visits to pilgrim centres are

arranged in some cases at an inter-village level. In the modern setting, illiterate workers have gone to work in the construction of dams, and for finding work in industrial centres like Ahmedabad. Finally, one more question may be raised : Where do the elite live ? It is not necessary to try to locate them in a city or a town. Local leadership, both traditional and non-traditional, can be found in the village ; a village that has got two retired government servants and ten others working out has got within it some of its own elite. The use of traditional caste leaders for influencing voting behaviour of candidates is coming into vogue. A village can produce leaders having their influence over smaller towns. Dube notes the presence of the rural elite which 'includes mostly people from the higher income groups, who have some education and urban contacts, and have active interest and influence in village and inter-village politics' (Dube 1958 : 57). In the rural areas of Western U. P., Majumdar calls them the 'know-alls in the village' (Majumdar 1958 : 329). 'They have special prestige status in the village. People listen to them, admire them for their experience, receive assistance and advice when they need the same' (Majumdar 1958 : 329). The elite, meaningful for a rural community, may then belong to the village, to a neighbouring village, and to a town ; and by the same logic the village need not always be on the receiving end of the communicating channel.

Certain observations of the use of terms are called for. Does the elite constitute half of the peasant society ? Sjoberg, from whom the concept of the elite has been taken, wrote only of 'a small minority' which Redfield interpreted as the elite (Redfield 1956 : 29). Dube described the rural elite as 'a small but significant' section of the community (Dube 1958 : 57). Where parts are equal and are only two in number, care has been taken in describing them differently from a situation where they are more than two. Distinction between moities and phratries precisely suggests the same. Parts or sectors would convey the idea more adequately in this context than 'halves'. The unequal parts in their size have not been subjected to any qualitative analysis or weightage to suggest their

equality in emphasis either. And finally do 'two-halves' bring into being 'the double' ?

## III

It is suggested that the aid provided by the concept of the little community be utilized for understanding the characteristics of smallness and distinctiveness, but for getting a proper picture of the village in the setting considered in this paper, factors other than these should also be taken up for examination. The village, even for being described in terms of its internal organization, requires a description of additional items mentioned at the end of section I. For surveying its connections with wider units and laying out the lattices or links, the peasantry-elite relationship is just one illustration, and it does not by any means exhaust the relations of the villagers with other villages and towns both in the traditional and the modern setting. While the leads provided by the formulation of the two concepts for raising significant points for discussion and for rethinking on the data gathered are recognized, the way in which thinking has been aided thus far now necessitate that fresh points be added for being considered, that broader and more inclusive categories on more than two dimensions be formulated, and data described and analysed through such multiphased categories even though a new conceptual label may not be readily available to designate them.

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# SOMATIC VARIATIONS AMONG THE HILL AND PLAINS GARO OF ASSAM

BHUBAN M. DAS

THE district of Goalpara is bounded on the south by the Garo Hills (25°9′ 26°1′ N, 89°49′/91°2′ E) which has sheltered from the distant past a tribal group known as the Garo, who, on their own account, prefer to be addressed as the Mande. They are also widely scattered over the plains districts of Goalpara and Kamrup in Assam, their main concentration being along the low lands of the Garo Hills and Goalpara districts.

The population of the Garo Hills was enumerated to be 103, 810 in the 1901 Census, but in the 1941 Census, we find the Garo of the Garo Hills and Goalpara district to be 226, 273 in number. In the 1951 Census the Garo population in the Garo Hills and Goalpara districts was 234, 799. A steady growth in the population of the Garo is thus apparent from these enumerations.

Traditional folk-tales of the Garo indicate by implication that the ancestors of the Garo migrated from a mountainous territory situated in the extreme north of Assam. It has also been suggested that they might have migrated from the east. Within the Garo Hills, the movement during the last fifteen to twenty generations has been westwards, up the valley of the Someswari and outwards into the low hills, south and west of the main range.

The Garo of Assam, now-a-days, form two distinct sections, namely, (i) Hill Section and (ii) Plains Section. It is not known when their movements brought about the existing pattern of tribal distribution. Today, we find a large number of the Garo living within the Goalpara district.

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The Hill Garo are a matrilineal people. They have adopted a way of living which is inherently required in a hilly habitat. They practise axe- or shifting cultivation. Recently they have learnt the technique of terrace-cultivation with contour-bunds, horticulture and fruit-growing in orchards.

The Plains Garo, subjected to a way of living in the plains, have learnt ploughing. They are still maintaining the matrilineal tradition, but are under the influence of the neighbouring patrilineal communities. Contact with the latter has apparently brought about noteworthy changes in their physical and social constitution.

In the countryside, the Plains Garo vary very little from the neighbouring patrilineal peasants in regard to their ways of livelihood, though they differ socially. The daily lives of the Plains Garo and of the local Hindu peasants have been moulded to a great extent in the same direction ; but on account of their time-honoured social traditions, they have still managed to preserve separate identity.

## *Hill Garo*

After a preliminary reconnoitre, Tikirkilla, a small locality situated at a distance of about 43 miles from Goalpara town on the way to Tura, was found suitable as the main centre for collecting data. As such, a camp was set up at Tikirkilla in the month of December, 1957.

The Hill Garo come down to Tikirkilla on market days from very distant places (even upto 16 to 20 miles away from Tikirkilla). They also visit the Fatamati market (3 miles from Tikirkilla towards Goalpara). In both the above villages, the Hill Garo were measured and somatoscopic characters were observed. Anthropometric data were also collected from the following villages : Mandagiri, Ronipara, Damalgiri, Jhongsipara, Chingmagiri and Dalbanggiri.

## *Plains Garo*

Anthropometric data from among the Plains Garo were collected during the winter of 1954-55 from the neighbouring areas of Dudhnai, a motor station on the Gauhati-Goalpara Road at a distance of about 65 miles from Gauhati. Besides collecting data at Damra, Dudhnai and Daranggiri markets, a few villages, like Nishangram, Muskuli Garopara, Damra, were also visited for the above purpose.

These places were revisited during October-November, 1957, in order to verify and collect more data.

In both the cases only 100 adult males were measured.

## *Somatoscopic Characters*

TABLE 1

*Skin colour*

| | Hill Garo | Plains Garo |
|---|---|---|
| | % | % |
| Light brown | 11 | 32 |
| Brown | 54 | 31 |
| Dark | 35 | 37 |

The Hill Garo possess brown (54%) skin colour in the majority. Dark brown skin occurs in 35% of the individuals, 11% possess light brown skin colour. Among the Plains Garo the three shades are more or less equally distributed as will be seen from the table.

In the frequency of dark brown skin colour the two samples agree with one another. The Plains Garo however show a greater tendency towards lighter skin colour than the Hill Garo. The frequency of light brown colour is nearly three times greater in the Plains than among the Hill.

TABLE 2

*Head Hair*

| *Colour* | | | *Form* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Hill Garo | Plains Garo | | Hill Garo | Plains Garo |
| | % | % | | % | % |
| No. 1 (Dark) | 40 | 41 | Straight smooth | 60 | 44 |
| No. 2 (Reddish brown) | 44 | 49 | Flat wavy | 19 | 30 |
| Between 1 and 2 | 16 | 10 | Broad wavy | 16 | 14 |
| | | | Narrow wavy | 5 | 12 |
| | | *Texture* | | | *Quantity* |
| Coarse | 86 | 78 | Scant | — | — |
| Medium | 14 | 22 | Medium | 39 | 34 |
| Fine | 0 | 0 | Rich | 58 | 64 |
| | | | Bald | 3 | 2 |

Hair colour was observed according to hair colour samples described by Banerjee (1956).

Both the Garo (Hill, 44% ; Plains, 49%) samples show the highest frequency of reddish brown (No. 2) hair, which is closely followed by dark colour (No. 1) (Hill, 40% ; Plains, 41%).

Hair form appears to be straight and smooth in the majority in the two Garo samples, Hills, 60%, Plains, 44%. The two populations differ in the frequency of flat wavy : the Plains Garo showing 30% in comparison with 19% among the Hill Garo. Broad waves appear to be almost equal in the two Garo groups, while the Plains Garo show a higher frequency of narrow wavy hair than the Hill Garo.

In both the Garo samples, coarse hair occurs in the majority (Hills, 86% ; Plains, 78%). The Plains Garo show 22% medium texture in comparison with 14% among the Hill Garo.

The Garo are characterized by thick growth of hair on the head (Hills, 58% ; Plains, 64%). Medium quantity of hair is found in 39% among the Hill Garo and in 34% among the Plains.

The two sections thus appear to agree with one another in the characteristics of hair, though there is a tendency among the Plains Garo to show more wavy form of head-hair than the Hill Garo.

TABLE 3

*Beard and Moustache*

| | Hill Garo % | Plains Garo % |
|---|---|---|
| Scanty | 94 | 95 |
| Medium | 6 | 5 |

Both the Hill and the Plains Garo show scanty beard and moustache predominantly.

TABLE 4

*Forehead*

| | Hill Garo % | Plains Garo % |
|---|---|---|
| *Height* : | | |
| High | 7 | 18 |
| Medium | 64 | 75 |
| Low | 29 | 7 |
| *Breadth* : | | |
| Narrow | 18 | 42 |
| Medium | 77 | 52 |
| Broad | 5 | 6 |
| *Slope* : | | |
| Straight, i.e. Absent | 69 | 52 |
| Medium | 22 | 35 |
| Retreating | 9 | 13 |

Both the Garo samples are characterized by foreheads with medium height, medium breadth and absence of retreat in the highest frequency. Although the general form of the forehead is similar in the two groups, there is however some difference in the frequency of the individual forms. Thus, among the Hill Garo, although medium height of the forehead is common, the frequency of low forehead is 29% in comparison with 7% among the Plains Garo. There has thus been a corresponding change in high forehead as well. Corresponding

to the height of the forehead there has also been change in its breadth. Besides the highest frequency of medium breadth in both the samples, the Plains Garo (42%) appear to have more of the narrow type than the Hill Garo (18%). Similarly, in the slope of the forehead, the Plains Garo (52%) appear to show less of the straight type than the Hill Garo (69%).

It appears therefore that though there is no difference in the general form of the forehead, the Plains Garo show some noteworthy deviation from the Hill Garo type.

TABLE 5

*Eye*

| | *Iris colour* | | | *Iris structure* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Hill Garo | Plains Garo | | Hill Garo | Plains Garo |
| | % | % | | % | % |
| Light brown | 16 | 34 | Homogeneous | 47 | 69 |
| Brown | 36 | 32 | Rayed | 7 | 5 |
| Dark brown | 48 | 34 | Zoned | 46 | 26 |
| | *Sclera* | | | *Slit* | |
| Clear | 47 | 53 | Straight | 18 | 15 |
| Speckled | 17 | 53 | Oblique | 82 | 85 |
| Yellow | 36 | 36 | | | |
| | *Palpebral fissure* | | | | |
| Narrow | 65 | 65 | | | |
| Medium | 33 | 35 | | | |
| Wide | 2 | 2 | | | |

| | *Eye fold* | | | *Eyebrow* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Hill Garo | Plains Garo | | Hill Garo | Plains Garo |
| | % | % | | % | % |
| Absent | 12 | 24 | Thin | 62 | 43 |
| Mongolian fold : | | | Medium | 38 | 56 |
| Trace | 26 | 28 | Thick | 0 | 1 |
| Medium | 20 | 12 | Separate | 97 | 98 |
| Marked | 10 | 8 | Connected | 3 | 2 |
| Median fold : | | | | | |
| Trace | 4 | 6 | | | |
| Medium | 18 | 16 | | | |
| Marked | 10 | 6 | | | |

The two Garo samples differ widely in colour and in the structure of the iris of the eye. Among the Hill Garo, the predominant colour of the iris is dark brown (48%) followed by brown (36%), while among the Plains Garo all the three iris colours are nearly equally distributed, light brown and dark brown being 34% each, while brown is 32%. Thus the Plains Garo show a higher frequency of light-coloured eyes than the Hill Garo.

Similarly, in the structure of the iris, the Plains Garo show a higher frequency of the homogeneous (69%) type and a lower percentage of the zoned (26%) type than the Hill Garo, who possess nearly equal percentages (47% and 46%) of the two iris structures.

The sclera of the eye is clear in the majority of the cases among the two Garo samples, and in both cases the yellow colour of the sclera occupies the second position in frequency.

The eye slit is oblique in the majority of the two Garo samples.

The palpebral fissure is narrow in both the Garo samples and there is no difference in the frequency of the other two types of fissures.

In respect of the absence of the Mongolian fold the Plains Garo (24%) show twice the frequency of the Hill Garo (12%). It appears that this fold is less strongly marked among the Plains Garo than among the Hill. Median fold occurs in almost equal frequencies.

In the form of the eyebrows again, the two Garo samples differ in respect of thin and medium forms. The medium form occurs in a higher frequency among the Plains Garo (56%) than the Hill Garo (38%), which has also caused the decrease in the frequency of thin eyebrows among the former.

TABLE 6

*Supraorbital Ridges*

| | Hill Garo | Plains Garo |
|---|---|---|
| | % | % |
| Trace | 31 | 42 |
| Moderate | 65 | 58 |
| Massive | 5 | 0 |

Both the Garo samples possess moderate type of supraorbital ridges in the majority (Hill, 65% ; Plains, 58%). It appears as traces in 31% and 42% in the Hills and the Plains respectively. The massive type of supraorbital ridge, which is found in 5% among the Hill Garo, does not appear at all among the Plains section. The Plains Garo appear to show somewhat refined features than the Hill Garo in this character of the forehead.

TABLE 7

*Nose*

| | Hill Garo % | Plains Garo % |
|---|---|---|
| *Depression* : | | |
| Shallow | 9 | 25 |
| Medium | 47 | 64 |
| Deep | 44 | 11 |
| *Bridge* : | | |
| Straight | 56 | 46 |
| Convex | 7 | 1 |
| Concave | 30 | 35 |
| Concavo-convex | 7 | 18 |
| *Septum* : | | |
| Horizontal | 66 | 49 |
| Downward | 3 | 2 |
| Upward | 31 | 49 |

The Hill Garo possess noses with medium/deep (47/44%) depression, straight bridge (56%) and horizontal septum (66%). The Plains Garo, on the other hand, show a high percentage of the medium nasal depression (64%), straight bridge (46%) and horizontal/upward septum (49%).

The two Garo samples differ widely in the depression of the nose. Though both possess the highest percentage of medium depression, its percentage is higher among the Plains Garo (64%) than among the Hill (47%). Deep type of depression is four times greater among the latter (44%) than the former (11%). Similarly, the percentage of shallow type is nearly 3 times higher among the Plains Garo (25%) than among the Hill (9%).

Both the sections possess straight bridge in the majority (Hills, 56% ; Plains, 46%), although there are slight differences in the frequency of the other types as shown in the above table.

In respect of the nasal septum it appears that the Plains Garo have appreciably changed from the Hill Garo type of horizontal septum. Its frequency has decreased to 49% from the Hill Garo percentage of 66, while correspondingly the upward type has increased from 31% among the Hill Garo to 49% in the Plains Garo.

TABLE 8

*Zygomatic Arch*

| | Hill Garo % | Plains Garo % |
|---|---|---|
| *Prominence* : | | |
| Slight | 2 | 5 |
| Medium | 14 | 52 |
| Marked | 84 | 43 |

The malar prominence is marked (84%) among the Hill Garo while the Plains Garo show the medium type in the highest (52%) frequency. The marked type occurs in 43% among the latter group.

TABLE 9

*Lips*

| | *Size* | | | *Eversion* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Hill Garo % | Plains Garo % | | Hill Garo % | Plains Garo % |
| Thin | 3 | 7 | Absent | 60 | 63 |
| Medium | 97 | 91 | Slight | 35 | 37 |
| Thick | 0 | 2 | Medium | 5 | 0 |

Among both the Garo samples the lips are medium in size (Hill, 97% ; Plains, 91%) showing no eversion (Hill, 60% ; Plains, 63%) in the majority. Slight eversion is seen almost equally among the two (Hill Garo, 35% ; Plains Garo, 37%).

TABLE 10

*Chin*

| | *Prominence* | | | *Form* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Hill Garo % | Plains Garo % | | Hill Garo % | Plains Garo % |
| Pointed | 5 | 5 | Oval | 86 | 63 |
| Medium | 62 | 69 | Pointed | 13 | 0 |
| Receding | 33 | 26 | Square | 1 | 6 |
| | | | Round | 0 | 31 |

The prominence of chin is medium in the majority of the two Garo groups (Hill, 62% ; Plains, 69%). Receding chin occurs in 33% and 26% in the Hill and in the Plains respectively.

Both possess oval chin in the highest frequency. Its percentage is however greater in the Hill Garo (86%) than among the Plains (63%). The latter is conspicuous in having 31% of round chin which has not been found at all in the Hills.

TABLE 11

*Prognathism*

| | Hill Garo % | | Plains Garo % | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Absent | 22 | | 35 | |
| Slight | 33 | | 58 | |
| Medium | 30 | 78 | 7 | 65 |
| Marked | 15 | | 0 | |

Both the samples show a high percentage (Hill, 78% ; Plains, 65%) of prognathism. It apears to have considerably decreased in the Plains group, where only 58% show slight prognathism and 7% a medium amount of it.

TABLE 12

*Ear Lobe*

| | Hill Garo % | | Plains Garo % | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Absent* | 55 | | 38 | |
| *Present* : | | | | |
| Attached | 21 | 45 | 32 | 62 |
| Free | 24 | | 30 | |

Among the Hill Garo, lobe of the ear is absent in the majority (55%), while it is absent in 38% among the Plains Garo. Both attached and free types of lobes occur in higher percentages among the latter than in the former.

TABLE 13

*Body and Limb*

| | Hill Garo % | Plains Garo % |
|---|---|---|
| Slender | 1 | 3 |
| Medium | 36 | 47 |
| Sturdy | 63 | 50 |

TABLE 14

*Statistical constants of the Measurements (in cm.) and Indices with their respective Standard Errors.*

| *Characters :* | Hill Garo [$n$=100] | | | | Plains Garo [$n$=100] | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Range | Mean±S.E. | S.D.±S.E. | C.V.±S.E. | Range | Mean±S.E. | S. D.±S.E. | C.V.±S.E. |
| Stature | 142.9 - 173.9 | 159.49±.55 | 5.50±.38 | 3.45±.24 | 148.9 - 170.5 | 161.92±.40 | 4.08±.28 | 2.51±.17 |
| Sitting Height | 75.0 - 91.2 | 83.21±.33 | 3.35±.23 | 4.02±.28 | 69.2 - 90.4 | 83.80±.30 | 3.01±.21 | 3.59±.25 |
| Head Length | 17.8 - 20.2 | 18.79±.05 | 0.54±.03 | 2.91±.20 | 17.3 - 20.0 | 18.72±.04 | 0.45±.03 | 2.40±.03 |
| Head Breadth | 13.2 - 15.2 | 14.10±.04 | 0.42±.02 | 2.98±.21 | 12.9 - 15.3 | 14.19±.05 | 0.49±.03 | 3.45±.24 |
| Head Height | 10.1 - 13.8 | 12.01±.08 | 0.86±.06 | 7.17±.50 | 10.0 - 13.9 | 12.06±.10 | 1.01±.71 | 8.37±.58 |
| Hor. Cir. of Head | 53.1 - 57.3 | 54.74±.10 | 1.02±.07 | 1.86±.13 | 52.8 - 58.5 | 55.14±.12 | 1.21±.85 | 2.19±.15 |
| Frontal Diamater | 9.7 - 11.7 | 10.62±.04 | 0.44±.03 | 4.14±.29 | 9.4 - 11.1 | 10.48±.04 | 0.36±.02 | 3.32±.23 |
| Bizygomatic Breadth | 13.0 - 14.9 | 13.87±.04 | 0.45±.03 | 3.25±.22 | 12.8 - 14.9 | 13.77±.04 | 0.41±.03 | 2.97±.21 |
| Bigonial Breadth | 9.2 - 11.0 | 10.10±.04 | 0.48±.03 | 4.75±.33 | 8.5 - 11.7 | 10.08±.07 | 0.67±.05 | 6.64±.47 |
| Nasal Height | 3.9 - 5.4 | 4.69±.03 | 0.34±.02 | 7.27±.51 | 3.9 - 5.7 | 4.78±.04 | 0.37±.03 | 7.74±.55 |
| Nasal Breadth | 3.1 - 4.6 | 4.00±.02 | 0.26±.01 | 6.67±.47 | 3.1 - 4.5 | 3.94±.03 | 0.26±.02 | 6.59±.47 |
| Upper Facial Length | 5.9 - 7.6 | 6.70±.04 | 0.43±.03 | 6.49±.45 | 5.2 - 8.3 | 6.59±.06 | 0.59±.04 | 8.80±.62 |
| Total Facial Length | 10.2 - 12.4 | 11.34±.05 | 0.53±.03 | 4.75±.33 | 10.2 - 12.9 | 11.44±.06 | 0.63±.04 | 5.50±.39 |
| Girth of Calf | 28.6 - 36.9 | 33.28±.19 | 1.97±.13 | 5.94±.42 | 28.5 - 36.7 | 32.71±.19 | 1.99±.14 | 6.08±.42 |

| | Hill Garo [$n$=100] | | | | Plains Garo [$n$=100] | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Range | Mean±S.E. | S.D.±S.E. | C.V.±S.E. | Range | Mean±S.E. | S.D.±S.E. | C. V.±S.E. |
| *Indices* | | | | | | | | |
| Cephalic | 66.3— 80.9 | 75.17±.28 | 2.84±.20 | 3.77±.26 | 69.3— 84.5 | 75.77±.30 | 3.01±.21 | 3.97±.28 |
| Length-Height | 53.4— 75.5 | 63.96±.48 | 4.80±.33 | 7.50±.53 | 52.3— 79.7 | 64.46±.57 | 5.73±.40 | 8.88±.63 |
| Breadth-Height | 68.7—100.0 | 85.35±.61 | 6.13±.43 | 7.19±.50 | 71.3—101.5 | 85.32±.77 | 7.70±.54 | 9.02±.64 |
| Nasal | 68.7—100.7 | 85.33±.71 | 7.10±.50 | 8.32±.58 | 63.3— 97.5 | 82.36±.73 | 7.26±.51 | 8.81±.62 |
| Upper Facial | 41.7— 58.4 | 48.23±.34 | 3.46±.24 | 7.17±.50 | 38.2— 59.2 | 47.48±.38 | 3.83±.26 | 8.06±.57 |
| Total Facial | 72.3— 94.1 | 82.10±.41 | 4.10±.29 | 4.99±.35 | 77.0— 94.7 | 83.04±.48 | 4.95±.35 | 5.96±.42 |

S. D.=Standard Deviation

C. V.=Co-efficient of Variation

S. E.=Standard Error

TABLE 15

*'t'-test of Significance : Difference of Means*

*Hill Garo—Plains Garo.*

| *Characters* | *Difference* | *'t'* |
|---|---|---|
| Stature | 2.43 cm. | 3.57 |
| Sitting Height | 0.59 ,, | 1.31 |
| Head Length | 0.07 ,, | 1.17 |
| Head Breadth | 0.09 ,, | 1.50 |
| Head Height | 0,05 ,, | 0.38 |
| Horizontal Circ. of Head | 0.40 ,, | 2.50 |
| Frontal Diameter | 0.14 ,, | 2.33 |
| Bizygomatic Breadth | 0.10 ,, | 1.66 |
| Bigonial Breadth | 0.02 ,, | 0.25 |
| Nasal Height | 0.09 ,, | 1.80 |
| Nasal Breadth | 0.06 ,, | 2.00 |
| Upper Facial Length | 0.11 ,, | 1.57 |
| Total Facial Length | 0.10 ,, | 1.25 |
| Girth of Calf | 0 57 ,, | 2.11 |
| *Indices* | | |
| Cephalic | 0.60 | 1.46 |
| Length-Height | 0.50 | 0.67 |
| Breadth-Height | 0.03 | 0.03 |
| Nasal | 2.97 | 2.94 |
| Upper Facial | 0.75 | 1.47 |
| Total Facial | 0.94 | 1.45 |

The majority (63%) of the Hill Garo possess sturdy body and limb which is found in 50% among the Plains Garo. There has thus been a corresponding increase in the medium type (47%) among the latter.

## *Somatometric Characters*

TABLE 16

*Stature*

| Class | cm. | Hill Garo % | Plains Garo % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Very short | (130.0-149.9) | 5 | 3 |
| Short | (150.0-159.0) | 44 | 42 |
| Below medium | (160.0-163 9) | 29 | 36 |
| Medium | (164.0-166.9) | 15 | 10 |
| Above medium | (167.0-169.9) | 5 | 8 |
| Tall | (170.0-179.9) | 2 | 1 |

The mean stature of the Hill Garo is $159.49 \pm .55$ cm. with the range varying between 175.9 cm. and 142.9 cm., while that of the Plains Garo is $161.92 \pm .40$ cm., with the maximum of 170.5 cm. and the minimum of 148.9 cm. The Plains Garo are therefore 1.43 cm. taller than the Hill Garo.

Both the Garo samples show medium stature predominantly. The percentage is higher among the Plains Garo (54%) than the Hill Garo (49%). The difference in stature between the two Garo sections appears to be statistically significant, as is evident from the value of $t$ (3.64).

TABLE 17

*Cephalic Index*

| Class | Hill Garo % | Plains Garo % |
|---|---|---|
| Hyper-dolichocephalic (x-69.9) | 3 | 3 |
| Dolichocephalic (70.0-75.9) | 53 | 47 |
| Mesocephalic (76.0-80.9) | 44 | 46 |
| Brachycephalic (81.0-85.4) | 0 | 4 |

Both the sections show dolichocephaly in the majority, though the percentage of mesocephaly is also high. Dolichocephaly appears to be slightly higher among the Hill Garo (53%) than among the Plains (47%). Both show almost equal per-

centage of mesocephaly : Hill Garo, 44% and Plains Garo, 46%. Brachyephaly is absent among the Hill Garo, while it is present in 4% among the other section. The Plains Garo show almost equal percentages of dolichocephaly and mesocephaly, and this combined with 4% of brachycephaly, may be either due to some extraneous element from the plains or a change towards rounder head form due to environmental influence. The Garo do not practise any method of artificial deformation of the head.

The mean cephalic index of the Hill Garo is 75·17 ± .28 ; the maximum and minimum being 80.9 and 66.3 respectively. The mean head length is 18.17 ± .05 cm. while the mean head breadth is 14.10 ± .04 cm. The range varies between 20.2 cm. and 17.8 cm. in the former and between 15.2 cm. and 14.2 cm. in the latter.

The mean cephalic index of the Plains Garo is 75.77 ± .30 with a maximum of 84.5 and minimum of 69.3. The mean head length is 18.72 ± ·04 cm. with the range varying between 20.0 cm. and 17.3 cm. The mean head breadth is 14.9 ± .05 cm., the maximum being 15.3 cm. and the minimum 12.9 cm.

The two Garo sections differ by 0.60 in cephalic index, which is not statistically significant (value of *t* is 1.46). The Plains Garo however show a tendency towards rounder head than the Hill Garo.

The maximum length and breadth of the head in the two Garo samples differ by only 0.7 mm. and 0.9 mm. respectively, which do not appear to be statistically significant. The value of *t* is 1.00 in the case of length and 1.50 in the case of breadth.

TABLE 18

*Length-Height Index*

| | Hill Garo | Plains Garo |
|---|---|---|
| Class | % | % |
| Chamaecephal (x-57.6) | 10 | 11 |
| Orthocephal (57.7-62.5) | 28 | 31 |
| Hypsicephal (62.6-x) | 62 | 58 |

The two Garo sections agree with each other in having predominantly a hypsicephalic head in almost equal percentages. The other two types also occur in almost equal frequencies in both the groups. The resemblance is also borne out by the value of $t$ ($t = 0.67$), the difference between the indices of the two groups being 0.50.

The mean length-height index of the Hill Garo is $63.96 \pm .48$, with the range varying between 75.5 and 53.4. The mean head height is $12.01 \pm .08$ cm., the maximum being 13.8 cm. and the minimum 10.1 cm.

The mean length-height index of the Plains Garo is $64.46 \pm .57$, the range varying between 79.9 and 52.3. The mean head height is $13.06 \pm .10$ cm., the maximum and the minimum being 13.9 cm. and 10.0 cm. respectively.

The differenee of 0.05 cm. in mean head height of the two Garo samples is not statistically significant, the value of $t$ being 0.50.

TABLE 19

*Breadth-Height Index*

| | Hill Garo | Plains Garo |
|---|---|---|
| Class. | % | % |
| Tapeinocephal (x-78.9) | 13 | 22 |
| Metriocephal (79.0-84.9) | 32 | 30 |
| Acrocephal (85.0-x) | 55 | 48 |

Both the sections possess acrocephalic head in the majority. Its percentage is higher among the Hill Garo (55%) than among the Plains (48%). Conversely tapeinocephaly occurs in a higher frequency among the latter (22%) than among the former (13%). Metriocephaly is found in almost equal percentages.

The mean breadth-height index of the Hill Garo is $85.36 \pm .61$ with the range varying between 100.0 and 68.7.

The mean breadth-height index of the Plains Garo is $85.32 \pm .77$, the maximum being 101.5 and the minimum 71.2.

The means thus differ only by 0.03 units which yields the value of *t* as 0.98 and is thus not statistically significant.

TABLE 20

*Nasal Index*

| Class | Hill Garo % | Plains Garo % |
|---|---|---|
| Leptorrhine (55.0-69.9) | 1 | 5 |
| Mesorrhine (70.0-84.9) | 49 | 58 |
| Platyrrhine (85.0-99.9) | 46 | 37 |
| Hyper-Platyrrhine (100.0-*x*) | 4 | 0 |

The Plains Garo, on the whole, show narrower nose than the Hill Garo. Mesorrhine nose is found in 58% in the former as against 49% in the latter. The Hill Garo show 50% of platyrrhine nose which has decreased to 37% in the case of the Plains Garo. The latter also show an increase of leptorrhine (5%) from the Hill Garo percentage of 1.

The mean nasal index of the Hill Garo is $85.33 \pm .71$, the range varying between 107.69 and 68.75. The mean nasal height is $4.69 \pm .03$ cm., the maximum being 5.4 cm. and the minimum 3.9 cm., The mean nasal breadth is $4.00 \pm .02$ cm. and varies between 4.6 cm. and 3.1 cm.

The mean nasal index of the Plains Garo is $82.36 \pm .73$ which varies between the maximum of 101.5 and the minimum of 71.2. The mean nasal height is $4.78 \pm .04$ cm., the maximum being 5.7 cm. and the minimum 3.9 cm. The mean nasal breadth is $3.94 \pm .03$ cm. It varies between 4.5 cm. and 3.1 cm.

The difference between the two Garo means is 2.97 and the value of *t* is 2.94 which is on the border of statistical significance.

The nose of the Plains Garo is 0·09 cm. higher than that of the Hill. The value of *t* is 1.80. On the other hand, in nasal breadth, Hill Garo nose is 0.06 cm. broader than among the Plains Garo. The value of *t* is 2.00 which is not significant in this case as well.

TABLE 21

*Upper Facial Index*

| Class | | Hill Garo % | Plains Garo % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Hyper-euryene | (x-42.9) | 3 | 12 |
| Euryene | (43.0-47.9) | 49 | 44 |
| Mesene | (48.0-52.9) | 38 | 36 |
| Leptene | (53.0-56 9) | 9 | 7 |
| Hyper-leptene | (57.0-x) | 1 | 1 |

Both the Garo samples possess euryene type of face in the majority. Its percentage is 52 in the Hill Garo and 56 in the other. Mesene and leptene also occur in almost equal percentages in both the groups.

The mean upper facial index of the Hill Garo is $48.23 \pm .34$, which varies between 58.4 and 41.7. The mean upper facial length is $6.70 \pm .04$ cm, the maximum being 7.6 cm. and the minimum 5.9 cm. The bizygomatic breadth is $13.87 \pm .04$ cm. with a variation between 14.9 and 13.0 cm.

The mean upper facial index of the Plains Garo is $47.48 \pm .38$, the maximum and the minimum being 59.2 and 38.2 respectively. The mean upper facial length is $6.59 \pm .06$ cm., the range varying from 8.3 cm. to 5.2 cm. The bizygomatic breadth is $13.77 \pm .04$ cm. with the maximum of 14.9 cm. and the minimum of 12.8 cm.

The mean values of the two groups differ by 0.75 units, which gives the value of $t$ as 1.47. In upper facial length, the two samples differ by 0.11 cm., the value of $t$ being 1.57, this is also not significant. In bizygomatic breadth also, two means differ by .10 cm. which gives the value of $t$ as 1.66.

TABLE 22

*Total Facial Index*

| Class. | | Hill Garo % | Plains Garo % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Hyper-euryprosopic | (x 78.9) | 27 | 23 |
| Euryprosopic | (79.0 83.9) | 36 | 89 |
| Mesoprosopic | (84.0-87.9) | 30 | 19 |
| Leptoprosopic | (88.0-92.9) | 6 | 18 |
| Hyperleptoprosopic | (93.0-x) | 1 | 1 |

Both Garo samples show the highest frequency of flat faces : Hill Garo 63%, Plains Garo 62%. The long type of face is higher among the Plains Garo (19%) than among the Hill Garo (7%). On the other hand, medium faces occur in a much higher frequency among the Hill (30%) than the Plains Garo (19%). The Plains Garo show a tendency towards long faces.

The mean total facial index of the Hill Garo is 82.10 ± .41, which varies between 94.1 and 72.3. The mean total facial length is 11.34 ± .05 cm., the maximum being 12.4 cm. and the minimum 10.2 cm.

The mean total facial index of the Plains Garo is 83.04 ± .48, the range varying between 94.7 and 77.0. The mean total facial length is 11.44 ± .06 cm., the maximum and the minimum being 12.9 cm. and 10.2 cm. respectively.

In respect of the mean total facial index, the two samples differ by 0.94 units, which shows the value of *t* as 1.45. In total facial length the two means differ by 0.10 cm., the value of *t* being 1.25.

**Sitting Height**

The means for sitting height are 83.21 ± .33 cm. and 83.80 ± .30 cm. in the Hill Garo and the Plains Garo respectively. There is thus a difference of 0.59 cm. which gives the value of *t* as 1.30.

**Horizontal Circumference of the Head**

The Hill Garo show mean horizontal circumference of head of 54.74 ± .10 cm. against 55.14 ± .12 cm. for the Plains Garo. There is thus a difference of 0.40 cm. in this character of the head, which is nearly at the border of statistical significance according to the value of *t* (2.50).

**Minimum Frontal Diameter**

The Hill Garo (10.63 ± .04 cm.) differ from the Plains Garo (10.48 ± .04 cm.) by 0.15 cm. in respect of this character. This difference gives the value of *t* as 2.80.

**Bigonial Breadth**

The Hill Garo show mean bigonial breadth of $10.10 \pm .04$ cm. while the Plains Garo show $10.08 \pm .07$ cm. There is thus a difference of .02 cm. ($t = 0.28$) which indicates close affinity between the two samples.

**Girth of the Calf**

The mean girth of the calf is $33.28 \pm .19$ cm. and $32.71 \pm .19$ cm. among the Hill Garo and Plains Garo respectively. Thus the two samples differ by 0.57 cm. ($t = 2\ 11$), indicating no significant statistical difference.

## *Comparison*

From the above analyses it appears that the two Garo samples show slight variation from one another and do not show significant statistical difference in the majority of characters except stature.

The Plains Garo appear to be slightly taller than the Hill Garo. They show a tendency towards medium stature, while in the latter section, both medium and short stature occur in equal frequencies. It should be noted here that the two Garo samples do not differ statistically in respect of sitting height, and as such whatever difference is seen in stature is due to the increase in the length of the lower limbs amongst the Plains Garo. The latter show a higher sitting height than the Hill Garo.

In regard to head forms, though both the sections possess dolichocephalic head in the majority, the Plains Garo appear to show a slight inclination towards rounder head. The head form therefore appears to have undergone some change due to one reason or another.

As regards the other metric characters, although the *t.* test does not indicate any statistically significant change, there are certain facts which are worth discussing.

In the case of all the six indices it will be apparent from table 14 that the Plains Garo show a higher standard deviation and a higher co-efficient of variation in each case than the Hill Garo. This is also partly borne out in the case of absolute measurements. Out of 14 characters, 8 show higher standard deviation and co-efficient of variation among the Plains Garo than among the Hill Garo.

In respect of the mean values, however, the Hill Garo values are higher than among the Plains in all the characters except stature, sitting height, head breadth, horizontal circumference of the head, head height, nasal height and total facial height.

The author is indebted to Dr. S. S. Sarkar for his kind guidance in the preparation of this paper.

# PROPORTION OF UTTARA-RARHI KAYASTHAS AMONG KAYASTHAS OF BENGAL

JATINDRA MOHAN DATTA

( *Received on 21 March 1960* )

THE Bengali Kayasthas, who follow the Dayabhaga a School of Hindu Law, are sub-divided into four sections : Uttara-Rarhi, Dakshina-Rarhi, Vangaja and Varendra. The names are derived from the ancient divisions of Bengal. Those whose ancestors lived in the northern Rarh country are known as the Uttara Rarhis ; those whose ancestors lived in the southern Rarh, are Dakshina-Rarhis, those whose ancestors lived in ancient Vanga are the Vangajas, and those whose ancestors lived in Varendri are called the Varenda.

The traditional boundary between northern and southern Rarh is the river Ajay. Map no. 5 in Dr. Nihar-ranjan Ray's great book *Bangalir Itihas* at the end is not quite right. These sub-divisions crystallized by the time of Ballala Sena (c. 1160 A. D.)

Ordinarily, there was no inter-marriage between these sub-divisions of the Kayasthas. It is only recently, since the establishment of the Bagandeshia Kayastha Sabha in 1900, that inter-marriage between different sub-divisions have begun to take place ; and are now taking place in larger numbers with the passage of time.

The ancestors of some families among these different sub-divisions are common ; but on account of difficulties of communication in early times and of certain social rules, inter-marriage was not only rare but came to be looked upon as prohibited by usage, having almost the force of law. There is no bar in Hindu law against inter-marriage among different sub-sections of the same caste.

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Shri J. M. Datta is well known for his papers on the population of Bengal. He is a practising lawyer, and was formerly Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society and of the Royal Economic Society.

The Uttara-Rarhi Kayasthas, at the instance of the late Maharaja Bahadur Girija Nath Ray of Dinajpur and late Mahasaya Tarak Nath Ghosh of Bhagalpur, conducted a private census of Uttara-Rarhi Kayasthas by sending travelling enumerators from place to place between 1312 B. S. and 1317 B. S. (between 1906 and 1911). This was the first non-official attempt at census.

The results were published in 1912 in a printed circular. It has become very rare. From one copy preserved by Rai Bahadur Amar Nath Das, a former Secretary to the Bihar & Orissa Board of Revenue, we give below the summary of results.

The number of families and the total number of persons are 5,282 and 29,268. The average number of persons per family thus works out to 5.54 persons. The number of males is 15,104 and of females, 14,154. The total 29,258 differs from the earlier total by 10. The sex-ratio is thus : 1000 : 937.

The number of families and persons settled permanently outside the Bengal Presidency are :

| | Families | Persons | No. of villages where they are settled |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bhagalpur | 675 | 4,243 | 66 |
| Monghyr | 206 | 1,204 | 14 |
| Santhal Parganas | 187 | 952 | 32 |
| Purnia | 91 | 471 | 24 |
| Patna | 13 | 65 | 3 |
| Darbhanga | 1 | 6 | 1 |
| Total | 1,173 | 6,941 | 140 |
| Manbhum | 282 | 1,920 | 67 |
| Grand Total | 1,455 | 8,861 | 207 |

The average per village is 7 families and 43 persons and the average number of persons per family is 6.09 and the sex-ratio is 1000 : 987.

Most of the families outside Bengal have been settled there for centuries. Sri Kantho Datta was employed by Todar Mall

to prepare the *Ausil Jama Tumar* of Sarkar Monghyr in 1582. The fragment of the *Ausil Jama Tumar* prepared by him in Persian and bearing his signature in Bengali is preserved in the Record Room of the Bhagalpur Collectorate under double lock. Will some of our scholars of history inspect the same and publish its contents ? Some of those settled in Bhagalpur and Monghyr speak Chhika-Chikki boli of Hindi, but, follow the Dayabhaga. Manbhum is an integral part of Bengal, and five-sixths of the Santhal Parganas was a part of Birbhum until 1855.

The number of families and persons within Bengal is thus :—

| Families | Persons | Average per family |
|---|---|---|
| 3,827 | 20,407 | 5.33 |

The average number of persons is much smaller in Bengal. Probably climate is a factor. The sex-ratio is 1000 : 918.

The number of Kayasthas in Bengal was in :—

| | | Increase+ Decrease− | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1881 | 10,58,615 | | |
| 1891 | 10,67,147 | + | 0.8% |
| 1901 | 9,84,443 | − | 7.7% |
| 1911 | 11,13,684 | + | 13,2% |
| 1921 | 12,97,736 | + | 16.5% |
| 1931 | 15,58,475 | + | 20.0% |

Taking 1911 figure as base, the Uttara-Rarhi Kayasthas are thus 1.83 per cent of the total.

Assuming the private census to have more under-enumeration ; and the all-Bengal figure to have included Kayasthas of other provinces non-Dayabhaga who have come to Bengal is immigrants, their percentage is of the order of 2. Taking 1901 figure as the base their percentage is 2.07.

## *Geographical Distribution*

In the geographical distribution given below we have left out the non-contiguous districts of Patna and Darbhanga.

Those districts marked with an * were in Bihar. We have calculated the relative intensity of distribution thus :—

$$\frac{\text{Percentage in a given area}}{\text{Area}} \times 1000.$$

This is necessary to eliminate the effect of the area on the percentage distribution. For example, 10.30% are in Burdwan and 14.49% are in Bhagalpur. But Bhagalpur is a much bigger district than Burdwan ; so that relative intensity is 3.808 in Burdwan, while it is 3.429 in Bhagalpur.

| | District | Area in sq. miles | Percentage | Relative intensity |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Murshidabad | 2,091 | 15.82 | 7.562 |
| 2. | Birbhum | 1,699 | 23.84 | 14.032 |
| 3. | Burdwan | 2.705 | 10 30 | 3.808 |
| *4. | Bhagalpur | 4,226 | 14.49 | 3.429 |
| *5. | Monghyr | 3,927 | 4.11 | 1.047 |
| *6. | Santhal Parganas | 5,458 | 3.28 | 0.601 |
| 7. | Hooghly | 1,188 | 1.00 | 0.842 |
| 8. | Howrah | 522 | 2,28 | 4.368 |
| 9. | Midnapur | 5,245 | 8.00 | 1,525 |
| 10. | Jessore | 2,902 | 1.64 | 0.565 |
| 11. | Nadia | 2,881 | 1.00 | 0 347 |
| 12. | Dinajpur | 3,948 | 1.58 | 0.400 |
| *13. | Purniah | 4,972 | 1.61 | 0.324 |
| 14. | Bogra | 1,384 | 0,20 | 0 145 |
| 15. | Pabna | 1,818 | 0.25 | 0.138 |
| *16. | Manbhum | 4,095 | 2.06 | 0.503 |
| 17. | Bankura | 2,625 | 3.45 | 1.314 |
| 18. | Malda | 1,764 | 3.19 | 1.808 |
| 19. | 24-Parganas and Calcutta | 5,290 | 0,70 | 0.132 |

It will be noticed from the above table that there are no Uttara-Rarhi Kayasthas to the east of Jessore ; while in the border districts of Bihar there are as many as 24.55 percent. More than half of them are concentrated in the three contiguous districts of Murshidabad, Birbhum and Burdwan ; and if we add Bhagalpur, two-thirds of them are there.

# BOOK REVIEWS

**West African City : A Study of Tribal Life in Freetown.** *By Michael Banton. Pp. xvii + 228. 1957. Oxford University Press. 35 shillings.*

The test of the anthropologist's skill, one may say, will lie more and more in his ability to tackle the problems of a complex society. If Michael Banton's study is an indication of the results so far achieved, it shows a large measure of success. He has combined several techniques in the analysis of Freetown's social life. Underlying this combination of techniques is a depth of insight which is typical of the social anthropologist's work, and which can only be gained through intensive field study.

Freetown, the only large urban centre in Sierra Leone, has a population which approaches the 100,000 mark. The population is culturally diverse. It comprises a few Europeans, a few Asiatics and Negroes of two different varieties. Forming a group by themselves are the Creoles who are descedants of Negro slaves settled in the colony since the turn of the 18th century. The other Negro groups, referred to as natives, have been absorbed from the surrounding tribal settlements. The natives are of various tribal affiliations, and now constitute the majority of Freetown's population. Unlike the Creoles, they have deep roots in their tribal culture, and share many institutions with their non-urban congeners.

Banton understandably confines his study to a section of Freetown's population, namely, its tribal elements. His work, in fact, is an analysis of the migration of tribals into the city and of their subsequent adjustment to its social structure. This inevitability draws him out into other fields, such as Freetown's rural hinterland, and the urban setting which awaited the first tribal migrants.

The incentives for migration are many, although economic factors are of primary importance. The city offers employment to a growing population of farmers who find neither land nor work under existing conditions of cultivation. In addition, there is the lure of adventure which life in the city embodies to the homesteader, and the social prestige associated with it. Migration is both

seasonal and permanent. There was a great increase in its volume in the period following the Second World War.

The native migrants to Freetown were not favourably received. The Creoles tried to identify themselves with European values and regarded the migrants as 'socially and morally inferior'. The natives found great difficulty in making headway against opposition from the Creoles who were better educated and occupied important positions in the bureaucratic structure. Also, there was very little unity among the natives who constituted a congeries of tribal groups.

The migrants nevertheless set about to adapt themselves to the new climate of urban living. At first they were granted separate rights within the colonial administrative structure. The tribal institution of chiefship was adapted to meet administrative problems within the city. The rights of the chiefs were, however, progressively curtailed under various pressures. This did not lead to a collapse in the organization of the tribal groups. On the other hand, new structures, such as clubs and voluntary associations, emerged as symbols of tribal solidarity. Thus, a large part of the study centres around the problem of tribal re-integration in the context of an urban environment.

To social structure of Freetown bears clearly the mark of its history. To understand what Freetown is to-day, one has to go back to its past and to study the process of its gradual emergence. The author has evinced skill and judgement in relating his problems to their proper historical perspective. Social anthropology can no longer afford to ignore history as it was once thought to be possible. Only, one has to exercise caution in using the right type of historical material and in avoiding assumptions for which there is no empirical basis.

The use of quantitative methods also becomes necessary in a study such as this. It is clearly impossible to study intensively the whole community. One has to select samples of a manageable size. Also, one has to reduce the welter of variation to some sort of numerical form. Very often the use of numbers in sociological analyses produces undesirable results. What is meaningful is generally lost in a formidable array of statistical tables. Banton, on the other hand, has used his tables with ease and felicity, so that, simple as they are, they reveal many features of genuine interest.

Andre' Be'teille

**Schism and Continuity in an African Society : A study of Ndembu village life.** *By V. W. Turner. With a forward by Max Gluckman. Pp. xxiii + 348, with genealogies, tables, maps and plates. 1957. Manchester University Press. 35 shillings.*

There has been a growing awareness among British social anthropologists that the methods of structural analysis so fruitfully exploited in the 1940's have now become in some ways inadequate. This awareness was clearly voiced for the first time in Leach's treatment of discontinuity and change in his study of *The Political Systems of Highland Burma*. Dr. Turner is also faced with the problem of discontinuity, and his work is in many respects reminiscent of that of Leach. However, his study has to be considered as an attempt to refine structural theory, rather than a departure away from it.

Ndembu society shows an absence of sharp outlines. In this it differs markedly from Nuer and—as Turner himself points out—Tallensi. This difference is of great importance in the choice of concepts for describing the two types of society. Among Nuer and Tallensi the lineage system provides a firm skeleton for the social structure, and this renders both description and analysis comparatively simple. The structural categories of Ndembu society are more fluid and amorphous. They lend themselves less easily to simple and clear presentation.

A major interest in the book is the illustration of the nature of contradiction in Ndembu society. The village organization is based upon three important principles, namely, lineage, family and generation. Contradictions between these three principles 'are implicit in the terminology of the Ndembu and influence the behavioural norms governing the interrelations of kin' (p. 240). The operation of choice in resolving these structural contradictions has been fruitfully investigated.

The tone of Ndembu life is set by its high residential mobility. Individuals move from village to village in the course of their life cycle. Factions secede from a village to set up as new residential units. Villages move bodily across large territorial expanses. Ndembu have a system of matrilineal descent, but practise virilocal marriage in which the wife comes to live with her husband. There is an element of contradiction in this, and Dr. Turner shows how it explains some of the peculiar features of Ndembu society.

Ndembu villages are rather small, having, on an average, ten huts and twenty odd individuals. The core of the village is constituted by the headman and his 'matricentric family'. The strongest bonds are between uterine siblings. These come into conflict with bonds of affinity, wider lineage ties and the opposition of adjacent genealogical generations. Tensions between families often lead to secession The group which secedes is typically a group of uterine siblings. There is constant conflict between the principles of sibling solidarity and virilocal marriage for the control over women. Marriages are brittle, and women frequently leave their husbands to come and live with their brothers. With them come their children, the potential support of a seceding faction.

Ndembu lineages are extremely shallow. They seldom have a depth of more than four or five generations. The shallowness of Ndembu lineages is largely a result of their high residential mobility. This mobility, however, has a certain integrative value from the view-point of Ndembu society as a whole. It serves to spread kinship ties over a large area, and thereby creates a wider territorial solidarity.

Dr. Turner combines in a commendable manner the analysis of numerical data with what he calls a study of the 'social drama'. Although his work was mainly concentrated in a single village, he has a wealth of material covering a much wider area. In a fluid and relatively 'unstructured' society where *variations* are numerous, one can establish the typicality of specific patterns only through quantitative analysis. Dr. Turner has analysed a large number of genealogies to show us which are the typical patterns of residence, migration and social composition of a residential unit.

The analysis of 'social dramas' is particularly fruitful. It adds a time-dimension to the study and brings out graphically the processes of continuity and change. 'Social dramas' are shown to follow a characteristic pattern. The '*processional form* of the social drama may be formulated as (1) breach ; (2) crisis ; (3) redressive action ; (4) re-integration or recognition of schism' (p. 92). The skill with which the author handles his own material is impressive. One can only wish that similar techniques will be applied to other material so that wider generalizations can follow.

Andre' Be'teille

**Tribes Without Rulers : Studies in African Segmentary Systems.** *Edited by John Middleton and David Tait. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1958. Pp. 234. 28 shillings.*

This book is a sequel to *African Political Systems* which was published under the editorship of Professors Evan-Pritchard and Fortes in 1940. In the earlier book, the authors tried to cover the entire range of political systems from small societies of wandering hunters to large states of several million people comparable with medieval European kingdoms. The classification of political systems made in that book has become inadequate in the light of recent work.

This book is limited to a study of political structures of six communities in Africa. Among them authority is uncentralized and political relations are based on segmentary lineage systems. The social structure of all these communities is patrilineal and the geographical coverage is also not very wide. This is due to the fact that choice was confined to those societies where work had been done recently.

The subject dealt with in this book is chiefly the reciprocal relation between descent groups and local and political groups, between lineages and clans and local and political communities. This had engaged earlier authorities also like Maine, Fustel De Coulanges, Robertson-Smith and in recent past of Professors Evans-Pritchard and Fortes. The editors of the present volume attempt a classification on the basis not only of morphology but also functions of African institutions.

Among politically uncentralized societies alone the editors distinguish between three types, (a) in which there is no corporate lineage and in which political authority is vested in chiefs and headmen ; (b) in which political relations are controlled by holders of statuses in age-set and age-grade system in which political authority is vested, and (c) in which political authority is vested in village councils and associations. These are some of the intermediate types which have not found mention in *African Political Systems*. These are, however, not discussed in this book.

The classification of uncentralized political systems in this work has been based upon the ways in which kinship terminology is used to conceive and express relations between local groups, the degree of autonomy or interdependence of local groups in political situa-

tions, degree of specialization of offices with purely political authority and the way in which organized violence is used in the settlement of disputes, particularly of murder. The Tiv of Northern Nigeria and the Lugbare of the Nile-Congo Divide comprise the first type. In this the jural community is economically and socially autonomous. There is no specialization of political authority and those functionaries who are politically important are primarily holders of domestic and ritual roles.

In the second group are classed the Konkomba of Northern Togoland and Bwamba of Western Uganda. The political units consist of small descent groups. At this political level units are linked not by a single genealogy but by a recognition of mutual obligations. Lineages are arranged in a segmentary organization but are concerned more with inheritance, exogamy and family rather than with political relations proper.

The third type consists of the Western Dinka and the Mandari of Sudan. In this the jural community has a lineage structure. They have chiefs with certain specialized functions, but they are not important political figures.

A book of this kind has several advantages. Firstly, we get an authoritative account of the political system of a community recently studied in the background of its social system without waiting for the time when a complete account may be available. Secondly, it may serve as a valuable text-book for the study of African political systems in such departments of Anthropology where interest in Africa is growing. Thirdly, the layman who can hardly be expected to go through lengthy monographs is enabled to skim the cream of recent research. Lastly, the fact that a number of anthropologists have put their heads together and cast their material in a single structural mould has made comparison and classification easier.

Sachchidananda

**Caste and Communication in an Indian Village.** *By D. N. Majumdar. Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1958. Pp. 358. Rupees 20.*

This book presents an intensive study of a medium-sized multi-caste village about eight miles from Lucknow. The survey was conducted by trained field staff under the personal supervision of the author. It gives a fairly detailed picture of village life in Uttar

Pradesh. Though all aspects of life are sought to be covered, the main emphasis is on caste and its ramifications in social relations. The author has been fairly successful in delineating the Hindu social system through the study of village and caste. The role of caste as the dominating force in the affairs of a village as well as the interaction between one caste group and another has been dealt with against the canvas of caste dynamics.

It is heartening to find that such seasoned anthropologists as the distinguished author are turning to a study of the complex fabric of Hindu social system through a study of village and caste. This is the third book of its kind, the first being Dube's *Indian Village* and the second Oscar Lewis's *Life in a North Indian Village*. As the reader goes through the narrative, he is charmed by the story of the village, but when he comes to the chapter on 'Communication' his high hopes are belied. As the word occurs in the title of the book itself, one justifiably looks forward for a fuller treatment of that aspect and more so when in the Indian village scene, as also in the realm of sociological studies, the subject is engaging much attention and interest. The very fact that the village is so near Lucknow renders it amenable to continuous and variegated urban contacts. Though the villagers feel that the village is almost their whole world, the changes taking place around them are alterting the character even of that world.

The chapter on 'Recreations' is rather misleading. While we find an account of various kinds of recreations and pastimes in which villagers take delight, we are at the same time given details of environmental sanitation, latrines, food habits, structure of houses, drainage and diseases, food habits and germs, etc. It seems that all unclassified materials have been dumped under the title 'Recreations', as such a simple word as that can never have any pretensions to be inclusive.

Prof. Majumdar falls in line with Redfield when he believes that the village is a concept, a way of life, but feels that in Indian conditions, a village cannot be studied as an integrated isolate. He views the transformation of the Indian village scene as a process of 'transculturation' (p. 326). This term was used by the Cuban scholar Ortiz to avoid the ethnocentric association of the term 'acculturation'. We do not know if the author has brought in that term with the same purpose. While recognizing the need for a

conceptual tool to describe the acculturative processes in India, Prof. Majumdar does not see in it any sanskritization or de-sanskritization According to him, the word 'secularization' comprehends the process in a better way. Instead of replacing one term by another, I believe that there is room for co-existence as the terms describe different facets of the process of change Indian life is undergoing.

The author believes that Redfield's concept of rural-urban continuum cannot be applied in all rural-urban situations. He thinks in terms of two sharply contrasting constellations of values—two levels of living and experience. The concept however can be applied to the areas on the fringes of towns where it is easy to find gradual change from the town to the village in attitudes, world view, way of life etc. The dichotomy holds good for a town and an interior village, though there also the traditional village way of life has undergone significant change and sometimes the townsman may be outwitted by the villagers. Prof. Majumdar holds that this dichotomy is the greatest single factor which stands in the way of levelling up the village. As a matter of fact, levelling up does not mean that it should be made an inadequate or poor imitation of the town. There are certain values in rural life which have got to be preserved. Rural development does not mean doing away with the dichotomy. There is, however, no denying the fact that this dualism has preserved our cultural heritage.

Prof. Majumdar has done well to point out that unless inter-group relations are suitably tackled, the village will be like a stagnant pool without a spirit of dynamism. It is high time that our planners and administrators appreciated the importance of such relations in group dynamics as a pre-requisite to success.

Sachchidananda

**Food and Drink in Ancient Bengal.** *By Toponath Chakravarty. Pp, vi —72. Firma K. L. Mukhopadhya, Calcutta. Rs. 10, 1.5 dollars, 15 shillings.*

The material aspects of life in ancient India are inadequately known, and the author has done a useful piece of work by bringing together relevant evidence on one aspect of it, namely, the food-habits of ancient Bengal, from contemporary literary and pictorial or sculptural sources. The total evidence is, however, meagre ; but

this is thorugh no fault of the author. The materials themselves are scanty.

One feels that brief translations of texts quoted in either Sanskrit or ancient Bengali would have been a help to the general reader. One also feels that supplementary evidence culled from sources like Vatsayana's *Kamasutra*, which belongs not to Bengal but to Western India, could, or perhaps should, have been left out of consideration, except where there are specific references in it to the province to which the study has been limited.

Students of India's material culture will find the book useful and interesting in several ways.

Nirmal Kumar Bose

**Aspects of Culture.** *By Harry L. Shapiro. Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick. 1956.*

Three lectures delivered by Dr. Shapiro at the College of Puget Sound, Tacoma, in 1956 have been published in the form of a small book. The lectures are entitled, 'The Discovery of Culture', 'Culture and History' and 'Recovery of the Past'.

The author expresses the opinion that 'each age in the history of civilization is distinguished from all others by the characteristic ideas it entertains and by the activities it pursues' (p. 17). Yet, although the focal point is thus formed by a unique central core of ideas, culture can also be viewed as an adaption to environment. Reciprocally, it furnishes an environment to those who are born within its compass.

There is thus a synthesis between the super-organic as well as the organic points of view from which culture can be studied.

Some anthropologists are inclined, or perhaps have been inclined in the recent past, to under-estimate the importance of the time dimension in cultural studies. One notes with satisfaction that the author arrives at the following very significant conclusion : 'the pattern (as conceived by the anthropologist) is a tendency rather than an accomplishment, the inherent balance *toward* which the various elements are moving but which they never quite reach. It is a becoming, for cultures are never perfectly balanced and fully achieved' (p. 67).

Professor Shapiro emphasizes the view that a study of the past, important as it is, leads finally to the view that culture is in process

of constant change, and every unique contribution made under specific situations, succeeds in enriching the totality of human civilization. The static view that there are repititions—i. e. uniformities of a mechanical kind—is likely to lead one in the wrong direction.

In the last lecture, Professor Shapiro uses what might be called the anthropologist's point of view in an analysis of some aspects of contemporary American civilization. The proof of what we gain by a study of non-literate cultures lies in its applicability in the case of complex, contemporary civilizations.

Readers will find in the series of lectures much to stimulate thought.

Nirmal Kumar Bose

**Modern Science and the Human Fertility Problem.** *By Richard L. Meier. Pp. xiii+263. John Wiley and Sons. New York, 1959.*

In the first chapter, the author presents the problem facing mankind today as it has resulted from technological advance and consequent lowering of the death-rate.

A more or less detailed description of investigations carried out in Mauritus and Puerto Rico is presented, along with an account of almost all significant investigations carried out in the field of population control. As such, it should prove useful to workers in the field.

S. N. Sanyal

**A Course in Modern Linguistics.** *By Charles F. Hockett. Pp. xi+621. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1958.*

Hockett has given us a compendium in linguistics. It is no replacement of Bloomfield's work but is a 'course' in or text-book of modern linguistics. A text-book should include a full and up-to-date presentation of facts and principles. This has been the aim of Hockett too which has been fulfilled suitably in having the coverage of this course sufficiently wide. In addition, some of the recent important advances in the field have not been overlooked. The span of the book is spread over 64 short-length chapters (9 pages each on an average) comprising of an introduction (1) in which the author enunciates the frame of reference of language in terms of the terminology of Linguistics

only, Phonology (2–13), Phonology and Grammar (14—16), Grammatical Systems (17—31), Morphophonemic Systems (32—35), Idioms (36—37), Synchronic Dialectology (38—40), Linguistic Ontogeny and Phylogeny (42—54), Linguistic Pre-history (55—61) and Writing, Literature and man's place in nature (62—64). To these are added an appendix of language names, a bibliography and an index. Intricacies of principles of linguistic analysis have been gradually unfolded through short chapters on phonological, morphonemic and grammatical systems supported with copious examples. Confusion regarding mixing up of levels of phonological and grammatical structures has been avoided and it has been brought out clearly that the two systems are rather independent or parallel than levels in succession. In chapters dealing with diachronic linguistics (41—54) the factors and mechanisms of linguistic ontogeny and phylogeny have been discussed and presented in a way which is pedagogically quite effective. Portions on items of linguistic borrowing and change bring out the principles involved with clarity, while chapters on dialect geography (56), method and reconstructions (57—60) and glottochronology (61) include some of the important recent advances in the field of linguistic achievements.

At the end of each chapter the author has a careful listing of all the technical terms used, while with some chapters a few practical exercises have also been appended. These are quite useful pedagogical devices for a text-book. In this connection, however, the reviewer feels that the exercises given at the end of each chapter are not quite sufficient and quite often even the author recommends the use of Gleason's *Work-book in Descriptive Linguistics*' (New York, 1955) for practical work. Gleason's book is invaluable indeed ; but perhaps an independent appendix to the present book containing some more exercises for practice and application of the principles, as elaborated by Hockett, would have made this book even more useful and complete in itself. Secondly, in the opinion of the present reviewer, two more chapters, one on history and the present state of development of linguistics within the United States and European continent, and the other on a brief world-wide survey of chief language families, would, instead of increasing the volume of the book, give it an 'all-inclusive' character which a text-book should have.

Now with regards to certain topics on which Hockette's definitions and criteria, have not been as helpful as expected. In chapter 6, Hockett formulates criteria for identification of English juncture and recognizes sharp transition as / + / phoneme within a macrosegment. In 6.2, he lays down, 'When two successive (not necessarily adjacent) vowels within a macrosegment both bear / / /, there is always a / + / *somewhere between them*, and its *location is always easy* to hear'. Further 'when a stressed vowel is preceded by one or more consonants, *it is always clear* when the last consonant or so in the sequence goes with the stressed vowel or is separated from it by a / + /' (italics are reviewer's). To a native English speaker of a particular dialect, the criteria supplied and the examples given may be wholly reliable, as there is an element of 'feel' in all of them, but to others, these, for want of rigorous formal criteria, would still be open to serious disputation. Hockett's treatment is, therefore, no solution to the old controversery on the juncture-phenomenon.

All through the chapters on phonology (2—6) and on American English stressed syllabics, the analyses appear to carry the stamp of G. L. Trager and H. L. Smith's *An Outline of English Structure* (SIL, Occassional Papers 3, 1951) which, however, may not be the last word for other scholars in the line. At page 31, Hockett gives a list of vowels of his own dialect which may differ from that of others and thus bring about differences in some distributional statements. Study of idiolect is desirable but in a text-book like the present one, presentation of even roughly more standardized form of speech is preferable. At page 11, Hockett has stated 'In so far as possible, throughout the book, our examples will be drawn from English'. This has not been very helpful. In order to have as objective an assessment as possible of the workings of different criteria of linguistic analysis, examples from unfamiliar types of speeches were more desirable.

Again, in the chapter on inflection (24), unfortunately, Hockett has not been able to provide any rigorous definition and really useful criteria and the confusion with regard to categories of derivation and inflection remains yet as before. Hockett recommends decisiens on irregular formations on the basis of 'parallelism' and statistical prevelance of certain patterns. This is not quite precise. Similarly, defining *word* as a segment of a sentence

bounded by successive points at which *pausing is possible* is only a restatement of an age-old confusion. In the opinion of the reviewer, in view of the present state of controversy over considering *word* as a linguistic unit at all, an up-to-date treatment like the present one, should better do by omitting any reference to it. The reviewer is rather inclined to agree with Gleason when he says, 'Word divisions are part of our system of spelling conventions...As a spelling convention, word division follows its own, largely arbitrary rules' (*An Introduction to Descriptive Linguistics*, 1955, page 43). Hockett has viewed the use of spectrographic analysis (chapter 13) rather adversely and finds acoustic allophones 'numerous, diverse, intersecting and overlapping'. But the same perhaps could be said of articulatory phonetics. If a skillful linguist is able to interpret sounds in a speech as successive non-overlapping segments, it is quite possible that a novice will not be able to do the same. Impressionistic phonetics could certainly not be considered fundamentally more reliable than the objective measurements through sound spectrograms.

In the tables given at pages 19 and 20, there are a few gaps left. Even to a non-native American English speaker like the reviewer, a few examples readily come to mind. As for example, in Table 2.1, in (row) 13 × (column) 3 *sue* in 19 × 5 (*Rhine* and in Table 2.2, 3 × 4 *writ*, 9 × 11 *reef*, 15 × 12 *leash*, 19 × 6 *pang*, 20 × 3 *lore* etc. Was it due to faulty proof-reading ?

As stated earlier, the book is bound to prove extremely useful and could safely be recommended even to students of subjects other than linguistics.

R. C. Nigam

**Oedipus and Job in West African Religion.** *By Mayer Fortes. Cambridge University Press, London. 10s. 7d.*

Ever since Freud's bold speculations in *Totem and Taboo* and Durkheim's great work on *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, anthropologists have known that the springs of religion and ritual lie in kinship and social organization.

Prof. Fortes' work under review needs worth consideration. What he has tried to do is to relate particular religious conceptions to the significance, for the society, of the process of taking its individual members into itself. The superstition, beliefs in Fate

and the Ancestors seem to have been antithetical. 'The first', in the words of Prof. Fortes, 'is a moral, the second is supremely moral. In fact, they are not opposed but rather supplement each other in the West African religions'.

There are beliefs among Yoruba, Bini and Dahomeans which show certain obvious parallels with Oedipus and Job. But there are also more connexions which may be discerned only by close analysis of a society, its structure and organization. The author of this book has selected Tallensi for this purpose. He explains and exemplifies their belief in prenatal destiny, or evil fate similar to Oedipus and he also discusses their notion of Yin or Good Destiny, stemming from ancestors, which demands unquestioning submission, as the Old Testament God did with Job

The book contains very lucid description and philosophical thought on a subject like religion. Prof. Meyer Fortes is a noted anthropologist ; when he argues he argues with facts. The present work bears witness to this.

This book will not only be popular among general readers but will also prove very useful to anthropologists, sociologists, ethnologists and stndents of West African religions and cultures.

J. V. Francis

**Religions of the East (A Reader's Guide).** *Complied by Prof. E. O. James, D. Litt., D. D., F. S. A., Professor Emeritus of the History of Religion in the University of London. The National Book League.*

This booklet is published for the National Book League at the University Press, Cambridge (1959). It consists of a bibliography with brief comments on various religions of the East excluding Christianity and Judaism.

It is really a novel idea to publish a bibliography on a particular subject in a booklet form. The idea is to give ready reference to students and scholars on books of particular subject and to economize their time and labour. The compiler of this booklet under review, perhaps, had this idea while preparing this pamphlet. In a sense, this has lessened the burden of students and scholars of Oriental religion, who would, otherwise, lose their time and energy in searching through the catalogue of libraries.

J. V. Francis

**Leaves From the Jungle : Life in a Gond Village.** *By Verrier Elwin. Oxford University Press, Second Edition, 1958. Pp. 194.*

*Leaves from the Jungle,* first published in 1936, had received warm welcome from students of anthropology, enthusiastic social workers as well as from persons of literary taste. It had collected its reputation nearly two decades ago, and hence the present edition deserves to have a better reception now. This edition has in addition 'a little auto-biography' of the author, which besides dispelling some of the doubts and answering some of the comments sometimes levelled against him, provides a lively introduction to the book itself.

D. P. Sinha

**The Story of Man.** *By H. E. L. Mellersh. Illustrated by Salley Mellersh. Hutchison, London, 1959. 21 shillings net.*

In the present book the author relates the story of man from the earliest prehistoric period to the late neolithic period. Mellersh has presented the scientific facts in the form of a story without making any overstatement or understatement. The inclusion of drawings, diagrams, maps and photographs adds to the value of the book.

Aniruddha Behari Saran

**Australia's Aborigines, their Life and Culture.** *By Frederick D. McCarthy. Colorgravure Publications, 1957, Melbourne. Pp. 200, including bibligraphy and index. £5. 5s. net.*

With well over sixty colour photographs and about three times as many photographs in monochrome, and nine short chapters on the people described, McCarthy's book is a very remarkable one indeed, being closer to a picture album than anything else.

The text is free from technical bombast, and is particularly suitable for the average student of anthropology as well as for the interested layman. Describing mainly the material culture, social pattern, and religion and beliefs of the Australian aborigines, the text conveys a fairly clear idea about the people described. It is, however, the huge number of excellent photographs with notes on every one of them, which is the real making of the book, and as such, the attempt of the author and the publishers to publish a

book in the 'universal language' of photography, has been eminently successful. Though the collection of photographs is very good, yet one cannot help remarking that at least some photographs of the magic-men and dancers should have been in colour instead of being all in monochrome. On the other hand, the photographs showing Australian aboriginal art, are very fine indeed.

Special mention must also be made of the chapter-head designs and the notes on them. The occasional printing mistakes that occur, are not expected in such an otherwise well-produced and high-priced book as this. However, the price of the book is so high, that in spite of its general excellence, it must perforce be limited to the shelf of the 'big library' instead of being in the average interested man's book-case. In fact, a cheaper edition would be very much welcome.